

Attendance Policy

2025/26

EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY WITH INTEGRITY

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Consilium
Academies

Table of Contents

1. Introduction3

2. Legislation and Statutory Requirements3

3. Expectations3

4. Parent Communication/Home visits/Student Absence4

5. How we will communicate with you.....4

6. Medical/Dental Appointments.....4

7. Approval for term-time absence4

8. Intervention strategies for improving attendance5

9. Persistent Absentees (PA).....5

10. Rewards.....5

11. The role of attendance officers6

12. Punctuality6

13. Consequences for being late.....6

14. Breakfast Club.....7

15. Contacts7

16. Attendance Codes.....7

17. Understanding the changes to fines for term time holidays.....8

1. Introduction

Washington Academy is committed to ensuring all students achieve their full academic potential while developing the personal and social skills they need to start their lives as young adults. Data shows that there is a direct link between excellent school attendance and high levels of progress and achievement. We will work relentlessly towards an aspirational goal of 100% attendance for all students. Every student's minimum expected target for attendance is 95%. This means having no more than 10 school days of absence in the academic year.

2. Legislation and Statutory Requirements

See the Trust Attendance Strategy September 2024

3. Expectations

The school will: -

- Promote good attendance & investigate unexplained and/or excessive absence
- Ensure registers are taken daily for every period
- Work closely with parents/carers where a student's absence is a cause for concern
- Support students to achieve good attendance and punctuality
- Support students returning to school after prolonged absence
- Regularly review internal systems to ensure procedures are robust
- Analyse and examine attendance figures

Students will be expected to: -

- Start everyday with an Attendance focus, either celebrating high attendance or investigating why students have missed school
- Attend every day, on time. This means being on site by 8.30am
- Be punctual for every lesson
- Monitor their own attendance half termly with their form tutor
- Ensure all absence notes and appointments are shown to their Head of Year and where appropriate, the attendance team

Parents/Carers are expected to: -

- Ensure their child attends school on days it is open as stated in the Education Act 1996. This is a legal responsibility.
- Telephone school on each day of absence before 8.30am, providing details of the reason for absence, and expected date of return.
- Ensure their child arrives on time for the start of the school day at 8:35am
- Ensure their child is dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn
- Avoid any absence from school for any reason other than genuine illness
- Avoid making medical/dental appointments for their child during the school day
- Avoid arranging holidays during term time

Where attendance is of a serious concern, we may require medical evidence to authorise any further periods of absence through illness. This will be determined on an individual basis and parents/carers will be notified of this.

4. Parent Communication/Home visits Student Absence

If your child is absent from school for any reason you MUST let us know as soon as possible on the first day of absence, no later than 8.30am by calling 0191 5804956. You must provide details of the reason for absence and the expected date of return.

We will contact every student who is marked absent from school between 9am – 10am. This may be by telephone, text message, email, or a home visit for safeguarding purposes. We operate a 'check and challenge' approach for every absence to support pupil wellbeing. All actions taken and any necessary escalation will be in line with the child protection and safeguarding policy.

- If contact is not made with a parent/carer, eyes will be needed on the student in the form of a home visit.
- If this is unsuccessful then escalation will be made where necessary. Depending on the reason for absence and the history of absence, if a student has not been seen for 5 consecutive days, a wellbeing check will be completed in the form of a home visit.
- If this is unsuccessful then escalation will be made where necessary. If contact has been made between school and the parent/carer but the student still has not returned for 8 consecutive school days, another home visit wellbeing check will take place.
- If this visit is unsuccessful this may be escalated in a referral to the Police, to ensure the welfare of the student.

5. How we will communicate with you

We will text, email or ring you if your child is absent and you have not told us why. If we are concerned about your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you by phone. An Attendance Officer may make a home visit if your child is regularly absent.

If your child's attendance drops below the school's attendance target of 95% it is likely that you will receive a letter from school to say that they will be monitoring your child's attendance for a period and that any absences due to illness or injury will need to be evidenced.

If your child has a pre-existing medical condition that may affect their attendance at school, please contact your child's Head of Year or the Attendance Team to ensure that we can support you with this in any way possible.

6. Medical / Dental Appointments

We ask that all medical and dental appointments are made for out of school hours. If this is not possible, an appointment card/ parent's note must be shown to the school office before any student may leave the school premises. Where possible an appointment card or letter should be shown to the office in advance.

If it is an emergency appointment, please contact the school on the day of the appointment to advise us of the time of the appointment and the arrangements for your child leaving the school premises.

*Please be aware that if we have not seen any evidence or received a phone call from a parent/carer regarding an appointment we will not allow a student to leave the premises

7. Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong

- External examinations – where proof of examination is shown
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes

8. Intervention strategies for improving attendance

The Nest

The Nest is a provision in school to support students who are finding attending a challenge and require further assistance to get into school. The Nest is managed by Mrs Taylor who works closely with the attendance team and the pastoral team to ensure students could access if required. The Nest is not a permanent provision for students, but it does allow a safe space for students to attend school.

95% and above – Congratulations, doing very well

95% or below) - Letter sent home with registration certificate, this usually means your child will be monitored and any absence, without medical evidence, will be recorded as unauthorised. These letters are sent throughout the year.

90% or below – Students will be invited to meet with Attendance Team to look at targets to get out of PA status.

Parents will be invited to an Attendance Blitz due to there being no improvements in attendance and now being classed as a persistent absentee. The Attendance Blitz will have the Attendance Manager and Deputy Principal. Students will be monitored in school by the Attendance Team

85% or below – If the previous intervention strategies have not improved your child's attendance, Fast Track to Prosecution may be initiated. This will involve a monitoring period for at least 12 weeks. Prosecution could include a fine of up to £2,500, a custodial sentence not exceeding 3 months, Community Service (for all parents with Parental responsibility).

Please be aware that every child's attendance is looked at on an individual basis by the pastoral team. For example, if your child suffers from a medical condition that may affect their attendance the intervention/support strategies put in place would differ from those above.

9. Persistent Absentees (PA)

Any student whose attendance is below 90% is classed as a PA. Having attendance this low is detrimental to a child's development and progress. Interventions will be put in place to support a child and their family to increase their attendance so that they are not missing valuable learning time.

10. Rewards

We celebrate and reward those students that have excellent attendance but also those students who show improvement. It is vital that students are celebrated for their achievements and improvements. Attendance points are presented weekly via way of Class Charts. We also have form group attendance competitions on a weekly, termly basis. Every half term, pupils with excellent attendance are invited to attend a surprise reward activity.

Attendance incentives and rewards include:

- A whole trust attendance league
- House points for attendance at various points in the year
- Weekly attendance tracked
- Half termly attendance certificates
- Termly attendance certificates

- Half termly attendance reward activities
- Excellent attendance is also a criteria to be invited to the Year 11 Prom

11. The Role of our Attendance Team

Our Attendance Team are there to ensure students are achieving their potential through attending school regularly and gaining the support required. Our team are highly skilled and understand both school interventions and external service interventions that will support young people and their families. Hopefully by working alongside parents to support their child we will ensure the best possible outcomes for each child.

12. Punctuality

We expect all students to have excellent punctuality.

All students are expected to be at Line Up areas for 8.30am where they meet their form tutor and Head of Year.

Students begin to enter school at 8.35am. If a student arrives after 8.35am, they will receive an L code in the register.

If a student arrives after 9.00am, they must enter through the main reception area and they will receive a U code on the register, which is an unauthorised absence.

13. Consequences for being late

Why is being punctual important?

- Punctuality is important at Washington Academy because it directly impacts your ability to learn effectively - every moment in class counts.
- Being late disrupts the learning flow for both you and your peers - respect.
- Being on time demonstrates a positive attitude towards education, respect for teachers and your peers – a positive culture in school.
- Punctuality helps build good habits for future success in life – preparing you for adulthood.

What will happen if I am late at the start of the school day?

- Daily messages will be sent to parents / carers.
- Weekly messages will be sent home, informing parents / carers of the number of lates per week.
- Two or more lates in one week, will result in a 30 minute or 1 hour detention on a Thursday night (3pm-4pm)

If your child is going to be late for school, where possible contact the school office on 0191 580 4956 and advise us of the reason for your child's lateness. If there is a justifiable reason for their lateness the office will make a note of it and will ensure that your child is not given a 'late detention'. If your child has a medical appointment that will cause them to be late, please let us know in advance by either calling the office or sending your child in with a note/appointment card so that we can mark it on our registers. For emergency appointments a phone call in the morning is much appreciated.

The Heads of Year and Attendance Team closely monitor punctuality and parents/carers of any students who are late on a regular basis will be contacted and asked to come in for a meeting to discuss the effects of their child's poor punctuality and work with parents/carers to try and improve it by putting appropriate interventions in place.

Please be aware that the school can apply to the Local Authority for a fixed penalty notice for any student that

receives 10 or more 'U' codes for lateness. This may result in parents/carers receiving a fine of up to £160 per parent/per child.

14. Breakfast Club

To support your child with their morning routine, we offer a breakfast club from 8:00-8:30am. Students can spend time with their friends or can talk to the pastoral team or SLT at breakfast club while enjoying free cereal, fruit and juice. The EEF research demonstrates that attending breakfast club 'effectively prepares pupils for learning. Breakfast club schools also saw an improvement in pupil behaviour and attendance.' We believe that our breakfast club provides a positive start to the day and wraparound support for our pupils which is ran by Mrs Overton and her team. Please contact Mrs Overton, if you have any questions.

Washington Minibus

Washington Academy do have a minibus that supports students at the beginning of the school day with attendance and punctuality. If you feel that the start of the day is a struggle and a place on the minibus would support instigating a positive routine, please get in touch with the attendance team or head of year.

15. Contacts

School Absence Line:

Mrs J Mitchell – Deputy Principal
Mrs C Hill – Education Welfare Officer
Mr C McDonald -Attendance Officer
Miss J Briton – Attendance Officer

Heads of Year

Mr Calder – Head of Year 7
Miss Robertson – Head of Year 8
Mrs Coates – Head of Year 9
Mrs Frisken – Head of Year 10
Mr Hogarth-Willis – Head of Year 11

16. Attendance Codes

Each school day is split into two sessions, morning (AM) and afternoon (PM).

/ & \ = / is used in the morning and \ is used in the afternoon. Both these marks mean that your child was present and on time.

B = Attending any other approved educational activity

C = Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

C1 = Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.

C2 = Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

D = Dual registered at another school

E = Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

G = Holiday not granted by the school. The G mark is used if a parent takes their child out of school during term time

We take attendance very seriously because there is clear evidence that any absence from school can and does impact on children's attainment. The second most common reason for absence from school is for a family

holiday. Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time.

I = Illness (not medical or dental appointment) Please do not assume your child has an authorised absence just because you telephoned to inform us. If your child's attendance is low, we may require further information and may be logged as unauthorised.

J = Interview e.g. college interview

J1 = Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

K = Attending education provision arranged by the local authority

L = Late to school before registers close (before 9am)

M = Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

N = Reason for absence not yet established (it is important you inform us of your child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of absence otherwise this code will change to O)

O = Absent in other or unknown circumstances. The O code is used when we have not received any reason for your child's absence. These O marks shows that we have been unable to get hold of you and that you have not told us why your child was off school. O is also recorded where school feel there is not a good enough reason for your child to be absent. This is an unauthorised absence reported in the child's attendance certificate.

P = Approved sporting activity

Q = Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

R = Religious Observance i.e. EID

S = Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination

T = Parent travelling for occupational purposes

U = Arrived in school after registration closed (9:15)

V = School trip or another educational visit

W = Work Experience

X = Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

Y1 = Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Y2 = Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Y3 = Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Y4 = Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Y5 = Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Y6 = Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Y7 = Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Z = Prospective pupil not on admission register

= Planned whole school closure

17. Understanding the changes to fines for term time holidays

- **Who may be fined**

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent from school

- **National Threshold**

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

For example – a 5-day holiday would meet the national threshold

- **First Offence**

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for an authorised term time holiday the fine amount will be: -

£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days

This increases to £160 if paid between 22-28 days.

- **Second Offence (within 3 years)**

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be £160 per parent (who allowed the holiday). Per child. Which is payable within 28 days.

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued for unauthorised holidays recorded by schools after 19th August 2024.