



Washington Academy

Enriching Lives, Inspiring Ambitions

Dear Parent/Carer,

Important Notice: New Government Attendance Changes Effective 19 August 2024

As I'm sure you are aware, poor attendance continues to be a national concern. We are proud that Washington Academy has effective relationships with parents and carers and that we will always do our best to support you with school attendance.

As part of our ongoing commitment to ensure the highest standards of education and wellbeing for all students, we are writing to inform you about the new attendance regulations introduced by the UK government, which will take effect from 19 August 2024.

Overview of Changes:

The UK government has revised its attendance policies to enhance educational outcomes, reduce absenteeism and improve punctuality. These changes are designed to ensure that all students can benefit fully from their education. Please find attached an overview from 'Together for Children', Sunderland Council: -

[TFC Info for parents.pdf](#)

Increased Monitoring and Reporting:

- Schools are now required to monitor attendance more closely and report any absences to local authorities more frequently. This will involve more checks and communications regarding your child's attendance record.

Stricter Penalties for Unauthorised Absences:

- There will be stricter penalties for unauthorised absences. Parents may face fines or other legal actions if their children have a significant number of unauthorised absences.
- The 'Working together to improve attendance' DFE guidance states '*The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (5 school days) in a rolling period of 10 school weeks*'. These sessions include, when students turn up late to school after the register has closed at 9.00am. Students must arrive for 'Line up' at 8.25am. Any student arriving after registers close will receive an absent mark for the morning session.

The government published guidance states:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
 - A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
 - A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child. The case could be referred for legal action and prosecution could take place.



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Support Services:

Our school will offer enhanced support services to assist students and families in addressing any barriers to regular attendance. If you feel support is required, please do not hesitate to speak to Mr Graham, Attendance Manager.

Your Role as Parents and Guardians:

The DFE guidance states: *Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.* We ask for your co-operation and support in ensuring your child attends school regularly and punctually. Here are some ways you can help:

- Ensure your child arrives at school on time every day.
- Schedule appointments outside of school hours where possible.
- Communicate promptly with the school regarding any absences and provide necessary documentation/medical evidence when requested.

We understand that every family's situation is different, and we are here to support you. Please contact matthew.graham@consilium-at.com if you require any support with attendance.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs J Mitchell
Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour and Attitudes)

