



Wakefield Grammar School Foundation

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CHANGE RECORD - Annual Review Period

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V1.00	February 2024	Created for the Foundation (adapted from QEGS Attendance Management Policy)

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WGSF Attendance Management Policy

1. Introduction

Parents or guardians of pupils of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education by attendance at school or otherwise (Education Act 1996). Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children in FS2 will have their fifth birthday and reach compulsory school age. Parents of children in school before their fifth birthday are also encouraged to follow the policy.

The Foundation recognises that absence, particularly persistent absence from school, is a potential safeguarding risk and effective monitoring of attendance is central to the Foundation's role in keeping children safe. In addition to the safeguarding duty the Foundation recognises that to develop socially and academically, and to fulfil their overall potential, a pupil needs to attend school regularly.

This policy functions alongside the parental contract, which should be read and used in conjunction with this policy. This policy is to be used in the management of individual cases of pupil (non-) attendance, especially where a pupil's attendance is of concern.

WGSF follows the guidance of the Department for Education (DfE) [Working together to improve school attendance](#). This guidance is non-statutory and has been produced to help schools maintain high levels of school attendance. Following public consultation and subject to Parliament, the Secretary of State has committed to this guidance becoming statutory when parliamentary time allows.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the [WGSF Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#).

2. Aim

The Foundation is committed to a positive policy of encouraging pupils to attend school regularly. The schools will work with parents and pupils to secure this aim.

The Foundation will ensure that there is an efficient system, known to all, for ensuring that pupils who should be attending school have registered twice daily, or a reason for non-attendance is known to the schools.

In the event of evacuation of any school an accurate list of attendance /absence will be readily available to check that everyone is safe.

3. Taking the Register

Under the provisions of the **Education Act 1996 (s434)** and the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**, schools must keep an attendance register.

Pupils of compulsory school age must have their attendance registered twice per day. It is the practice of Foundation schools to register ALL pupils regardless of age.

The register must be updated twice daily at the start of morning and afternoon sessions. In addition all teaching staff must check that the pupils who should attend each lesson do so.

The register must record the following:

- whether the pupil is present, absent, or attending an approved educational activity.

An 'approved educational activity' is defined as:

- a) one taking place off the school premises;
- b) approved by a person authorised by the governing body or the Head;
- c) supervised by a person approved by the governing body or Head;
- d) of an educational nature, including work experience, field trips and educational visits, interviews with prospective employers, or for a place in Higher or Further Education; and
- e) Link Courses where pupils attend a Further Education (FE) college for part of their time, or franchised pupils receiving part of their education off-site at another location while remaining on roll and under school supervision (e.g. sick children being taught at home), or attending approved sporting activity:

When a pupil of compulsory school age is absent it must be marked as an 'authorised' or 'unauthorised' absence and the nature of the approved educational activity noted (for a pupil of compulsory school age).

All Tutor Group/class registers will be closed ten minutes after the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

4. **Monitoring Pupils' Absence Levels**

Please see Appendix 1 for roles and expectations.

Pupil absence levels are monitored using two key measures:

- overall absence rate
- persistent absence rate.

Absence information is reported as a series of totals (as percentages) across a period of sessions, either by school term or academic year.

After am registration, all absences will be followed up by the school office, with the unexplained absence of younger pupils and those pupils who are seen to be more vulnerable being prioritised for safety reasons.

Overall absence is the aggregated total of all authorised and unauthorised absences.

Persistent absence is when a pupil's overall absence equates to 10% or more of their possible sessions.

Attendance statistics will be measured across the whole of a pupil's school career, irrespective of their point of entry. This is with a view to capturing a full history of each individual pupil's attendance at the School, including any variation over different

periods of time (e.g. according to the particular stage of a pupil's school career and / or their point of entry to the School).

Please see Appendix 2 for the individual school's procedure of monitoring absence.

5. The Foundation's expectations for pupils' attendance

The attendance of each pupil is monitored by the pastoral team and acted upon on a case-by-case basis. The approach considers carefully the whole pupil, their individual context and their attendance data across their school career. In particular, the school will work closely with parents in relation to complex medical issues or prolonged illness to ensure appropriate support for that pupil. It is also recognised that early in a year, a small number of absences can quickly lower an overall attendance figure and for that reason, pastoral staff will also consider previous attendance records to help them make decisions about any emerging patterns or recognise where illness or other circumstances have created unavoidable short term absence.

The Foundation expects pupils to strive for an overall attendance record of 95% or higher.

Every pupil's attendance record will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and decisions will be made contextually and through discussion with parents and the staff most closely involved with the pastoral care for that child.

Where pupil attendance falls below the threshold of 95%, or any subsequent threshold or target set, these actions will be triggered. Thresholds and actions are detailed in the table below. They assume linear progression and in typical cases, each stage will be explored thoroughly before moving to the next. However, where there are repeating concerns, for example across one or more academic years, the School may need to elevate the approach and begin proceedings at a higher level.

6. Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- approve the policy and any proposed changes;
- receive reports from the Heads;
- review the working of the policy in the light of the Heads' report; and
- ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the schools, and is known by the parents.

The Heads will:

- set attendance targets as part of the development plan and target-setting process;
- monitor progress
- ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school.
- determine in collaboration with the Deputy Head and Head of Year where applicable (note this may not apply in the Junior Sections or WGPPS) whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the school's official form, or absences which have taken place for which no request was made;
- notify parents as appropriate that if a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly that his/her parents commit an offence;

- initiate with appropriate staff strategies to improve attendance;
- make an annual report with statistics to the governing body.

The Deputy Head (Pastoral) / Assistant Head (Pastoral) will:

- oversee the attendance arrangements;
- work with Heads of Year / Year Group Leads to ensure the efficient running of the system;
- make periodic checks of the registers to monitor pupil absence;
- make regular checks on absence notes and the reasons for absence;
- ensure that unaccounted for absences are followed up;
- deal with issues of inadequate registering;
- arrange appropriate training for staff;
- keep the Head informed of the progress of the policy; and
- advise the Head on any strategies that could be initiated or improved.
- work collaboratively (and in some cases line manage) school attendance officers.
- Liaise with the Local Authority where appropriate (engaging with the Early Help and Family and Youth Hub support services offered by Wakefield LA) <https://wakefield.mylocaloffer.org/early-help-service/early-intervention-and-prevention-service/>;
- Persistent Absence to be monitored and reported on at leadership meetings.

Heads of Year/Year group leads will:

- ensure that all pupil absences are noted and absence notes received from parents via phone calls to the attendance officer;
- make regular checks on the efficiency of the registering;
- make regular checks in collaboration with the attendance officer that absences are valid.
- ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with;
- contact parents over pupil absences where appropriate;
- make reports to the Deputy Head/Assistant Head (Pastoral) on the efficiency of the system; and
- liaise with the Deputy Head / Assistant Head over training needs.

Form Tutors will:

- ensure that pupils are registered accurately;
- follow up cases of unaccounted for absence
- keep the Head of Year informed of any signs of suspected truancy; and
- inform the Head of Year/Year group lead of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences.
- Attendance to form a large part of form time/class discussions.

Classroom Teachers will:

- check the attendance of pupils at their lessons; and
- inform the (Head of Year/Tutor/Phase Coordinator/ Year Group Leads) of the names of pupils who are absent without notification.
- raise an alert should students fail to present to their lessons.

Pupils/parents of pupils are required to:

- the Foundation expects outstanding attendance from all pupils. Pupils should aspire to above 95% attendance.
(‘Attending regularly’ means registering before the attendance register is closed for the session);
- if possible inform the school of their absence on the first day of non-attendance;
- reasons for absence to be communicated on the same day with adequate detail;
- medical evidence may be required should the absence continue
- discuss with the HOY/SLT any planned absences well in advance (eg a family holiday);
- make any request for leave of absence on the school’s official leave of absence form.

7. Inspection

The Deputy Heads will ensure that the School Admission and Attendance Registers are available for inspection by registered inspectors.

8. Pupil Leave of Absence

Leave can be granted by only by the Head on recommendation from the Head of Year or Year group Lead. Parents will be expected to use the school’s official leave of absence request form or by formal request in writing.

9. Granting Leave of Absence

The DfE [‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#) (February 2024), states the following in reference to granting leave of absence:

“All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances”.

Where there are siblings in the Foundation, the Heads will liaise to ensure consistency of approach.

10. Short Term Leave

The School can legally grant short term leave for family reasons. It is for the Head to determine the reasonableness.

Where a pupil becomes pregnant, leave will be given for no more than 18 weeks after which the absence would be unauthorised. The school will do all it can to support the pupil remaining in school as long as possible.

Dental and medical appointments are valid reasons for missing registration and constitute authorised absence.

If the pupil leaves for an appointment after registering no absence needs to be recorded.

The School may, exceptionally, sanction limited absence for young carers until other arrangements can be made. The Head will set a time limit for such absences in

consultation with the Deputy Head and Head of Year. The Head may also seek advice from the LEA or appropriate agency before coming to a decision.

11. Religious Observance

The Department for Education advice to schools published in October 2014 states:

“Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents’ religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.”

Careful consideration is given to pupils who take time out of School for religious observance and this will be supported by the school but monitored. The day or days for religious observance (3 days total) will be recorded as authorised absence; however, any additional days taken will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

12. Taking a Pupil off the Register

The Heads will authorise the taking of a pupil’s name off the register in accordance with the current [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) Regulations 2024](#).

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the WGSF Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (available on the [WGSF website](#)).

The Foundation has a responsibility to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, any children of compulsory school age enrolled at its schools who are not attending school or missing from school. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

Staff must follow the schools’ procedures for dealing with children missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

All Foundation schools must inform the Education Department at Wakefield Council of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period;
- have been permanently excluded.

Wakefield Council must be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil’s name from the register. It is

essential that schools comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

All schools must inform Wakefield Council of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence).

13. Monitoring and Review

The Designated Safeguarding Leads will review the working of the policy and report to the governors as required.

Appendix 1: Roles and Expectations

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

Appendix 2 - Procedures for monitoring absence

QEGS Procedure

Stage	Staff responsible	Actions
1	Head of Year and Tutor team	Monitoring of Year and Form group attendance each cycle in pastoral team meetings.
2	Tutor	Concern identified, FT discussion with pupil. FT phone call to parent, CPOMS log.
3	Head of Year	No improvement following Form Tutor contact, HOY contact by telephone, CPOMS Log
4	Head of Section	No improvement, HOS parental contact, using Letter 1, invitation to meeting in school with HOY/HOS, CPOMS log, Actions/Targets agreed
5	Deputy Head/DSL (Pastoral)	No improvement: Letter 2 sent to Parents outlining the serious nature of the situation and actions required if there is no improvement. This letter will reference possibility for referral to Team Around the School/EWO services at Wakefield Local Authority
6	Deputy Head (Pastoral)	Deputy Head/DSL to raise with Head to determine, in the context of the pupil's personal circumstances, whether place in School is compromised; also to discuss whether a referral to Children's Services is appropriate.
7	DSL	Referral to Children's Services or other appropriate external agency, Head to consider position in school alongside external agency action.

WGHS Procedure

Stage	Staff responsible	Actions
1	Head of Year and Tutor team	Monitoring of Year and Form group attendance each cycle in pastoral team meetings.
2	Tutor	Concern identified, FT discussion with pupil. FT phone call to parent, CPOMS log.
3	Head of Year	No improvement following Form Tutor contact, HOY contact by telephone, CPOMS Log
4	Deputy Head/DSL (Pastoral)	No improvement: Letter 2 sent to Parents outlining the serious nature of the situation and actions required if there is no improvement. This letter will reference possibility for referral to Team Around the School/EWO services at Wakefield Local Authority

5	Deputy Head (Pastoral)	Deputy Head/DSL to raise with Head to determine, in the context of the pupil's personal circumstances, whether place in School is compromised; also to discuss whether a referral to Children's Services is appropriate.
6	DSL	Referral to Children's Services or other appropriate external agency, Head to consider position in school alongside external agency action.

WGPPS Procedure

Stage	Staff responsible	Actions
1	Class teacher	Monitoring of Year and class attendance in pastoral team meetings and in weekly leadership meeting.
2	Class teacher	Concern identified, class teacher discussion with pupil. Class teacher phone call to parent, CPOMS log.
3	Year group lead	No improvement following class teacher contact, Year group lead, contact by telephone, CPOMS Log
4	Deputy Head/Head	Parents invited in for support
5	Deputy Head/Assistant Head (Pastoral)	No improvement: Letter 2 sent to Parents outlining the serious nature of the situation and actions required if there is no improvement. This letter will reference possibility for referral to Team Around the School/EWO services at Wakefield Local Authority
6	Deputy Head	Deputy Head/DSL to raise with Head to determine, in the context of the pupil's personal circumstances, whether place in School is compromised; also to discuss whether a referral to Children's Services is appropriate.
7	DSL/Head	Referral to Children's Services or other appropriate external agency, Head to consider position in school alongside external agency action.