

Wargrave House School

Remarkable

Autism. Redefining what's Possible

Attendance Policy

November 2024

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| Reviewer: | Deputy Head Teacher |
| Co-Reviewer: | Family Liaison Officer |
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| Committee: | Personal Development and Behaviour and Attitudes |
| Date Approved: | 01/12/24 – by email |

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Admissions Policy Wargrave House School |
| 2 | Partnership with Parents Policy |
| 3 | Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy |
| 4 | Visitors Policy |
| 5 | Behaviour support policy |
| | |

Change History Record

| Current Version | Previous Version | Summary of changes made | Section Heading & Page Number |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| Nov 24 | Nov 23 | Update to contact email address for Family Liaison Officer | P8 |
| Nov 24 | Nov 23 | Addition of Appendices 1 and 2 | P14-15 |
| Nov 24 | Nov 23 | Addition of section on responsibilities of the Sense Team | P12 |

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Introduction

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all our learners.

Some learners find it harder than others to attend school. This policy sets out how school staff will work with learners, parents, and partners to promote, encourage and support regular attendance at school and remove any barriers to attendance.

Policy

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all learners
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every learner has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure learners have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

Legal Context

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents> [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made>

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body

The governing board is responsible for:

- o Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, learners and parents
- o Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - o Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - o Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific learners, where appropriate
- o Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- o Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for learners who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- o Making sure the school has high aspirations for all learners, but adapts processes and support to learners' individual needs
- o Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual learners or cohorts who need it most
- o Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- o Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting learners needs
- o Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- o Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - o The importance of good attendance
 - o That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues

- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific learners, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual learners
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to learners and parents through all available channels
- Ensuring support and appropriate resources for the SENSE team to effectively work with learners and families in the promotion of attendance.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance - Deputy Head

The designated senior leader also known as the 'senior attendance champion' is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with learners, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with learners and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to learners and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Deputy Head Teacher and can be contacted via 01925 224 899

enquiries@wargravehouse.com

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 2), and submitting this information via the school's MIS system.

School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- o Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system CPOMS
- o Transfer calls from parents/carers to the class teacher/ SENSE team where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- o All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- o All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- o Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- o Make sure their child attends every day on time
- o Call the school to report their child's absence before **8:30am** on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- o Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- o Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- o Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- o Provide copies of appointment letters where appointments are during the school day
- o Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Family Liaison Officer who can be contacted via 01925 224 899
clairebyrne@wargravehouse.com

Partnership with Parents

According to Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- b) to any special educational needs, he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".

This policy document has been developed to ensure that Wargrave House School provides a clear statement of intent, expectation and consistent guidance in relation to the management of attendance and any requests for leave of absence.

Parents must ensure that their children arrive at school on time. Transport which has been provided by the child's Local Authority must endeavour to arrive at school for the allotted starting time, although there may be exceptional circumstances when this may not be possible e.g. distance/travelling time are lengthy and thus necessitating a very early home start more than would be reasonable to expect.

Registration

The taking of registers is an integral and key part of the school day.

Under Section 6 of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, all schools must keep an attendance register at the start of each morning session and during each afternoon session. They must record whether every student was:

- a) Present;
- b) Absent;
- c) Present at approved educational activity; or
- d) Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Consistency of registration practice will be maintained throughout school.

National Attendance codes will be used to help ensure consistency in treatment and recording of attendance and absence (appendix 2)

Reporting Absence

- (i) Attendance is monitored daily through registers completed for both morning and afternoon sessions each day. It is the schools'

expectations that all learners achieve 95% minimum attendance in order to achieve their educational outcomes.

- (ii) It is the parent/carers responsibility to inform school or college of their child's absence by **8.30am** by telephone. Where a child is ill, the nature of the illness should be described and if it can be predicted, the date the child is likely to return to school.
- (iii) Where no report is made, contact by telephone with the parent/carer will be made by midday of the first day of absence.
- (iv) Where absence is persistent or where there is a period of 5 days or more, the family liaison officer will establish direct contact with the family. This may include a home visit.
- (v) Children Missing from Education', August 24 where absence is for a period of 10 days or more (authorised or otherwise) the placing authority will be notified. If a pupil is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.
- (vi) School Attendance Order – sections 437-443, Education Act 1996 provides that no offence is committed where a student of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness. Illness is an AUTHORISED absence.
- (vii) Medical or dental appointments are AUTHORISED absences provided that confirmation has been received from parents/carers. If a student is recorded present, then must attend a medical or dental inspection, the register must record that fact. It is essential that there is a means of recording which children are clearly in school in the event of an emergency evacuation (e.g. fire). Similarly, the school must note the presence of a student who was not there when the register was being taken but had subsequently returned later.
- (viii) If a student is absent, without an explanation, they will be marked absent which constitutes an UNAUTHORISED absence and must be denoted. Please note for any learners who are working with social services and have an unexplained absence the school is duty bound to inform the social worker of the absence.
- (ix) The death of a family member will be responded to sensitively and requests to attend funerals or associated events will be granted. Such an absence will be AUTHORISED.
- (x) An offence is not committed when the absence of a student at compulsory school age is a result of participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong (see section 6 (2ii) Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) absence would be classified as

AUTHORISED. Completion of exceptional leave form to notify school of the intended absence.

- (xi) Regulation 6(3) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 provide that leave of absence from school may be granted to enable a student to undertake work experience or to participate in approved public performances. This would be classified as an AUTHORISED absence.

Requesting Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

- (i) Wargrave House School recognises the important link between regular attendance at school and the educational attainment of children. Leave of absence during term time may not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. An exceptional leave form is required to be completed at least 20 school days in advance of arrangements except for funerals.
- (ii) Amendments to the 2006 regulations of 'The Education (Pupil registration) regulations' remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The Head Teacher has the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances, and it is up to them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school.
- (iii) Requests for exceptional term time leave must be made at least 20 school days in advance of any arrangements being made. This will allow sufficient time for the request to be considered by the school. The request will be made in writing by using 'Request for Exceptional Leave' form, copies of which are available from the school office and website.
- (iv) The school will reach a decision and send a written response to the parent/carer within 10 school days of the leave request being received.
- (v) The school will also inform the placing authority of any leave that has been granted and the reasons for authorisation.
- (vi) Where a request is not made or has not been granted and the parent/carer takes the child out of school, then this will constitute an UNAUTHORISED absence. Any unauthorised absences are reported to placing authorities who may wish to take action themselves.
- (vii) The decision of the Head Teacher is final.

Support for Parents and Families.

Expect

We aspire to high standards of attendance from all learners and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school. As a school we have an expectation of a minimum of 95% attendance. Parents/carers will be informed on a termly basis of their child's attendance levels.

100% Best chance of achieving outcomes

95% " minimum expected attendance. Parent/carer notified should attendance fall below 95%

90% Reduced opportunity to achieve outcomes. Parent contacted to establish support needs

85% Early Help as appropriate

80% Serious impact on education and lowest chance of achieving outcomes.

75% significant impact on education and possible implications for Local Authority Funding

Monitor

Half term attendance data will be monitored by the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher with regular reporting to the governing body.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, our family liaison officer will contact parents and learners to discuss to better understand the barriers to attendance and work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

There are a variety of support systems available in school including early help and specialist input from our Autism Education Practitioners and Sundial Therapists.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working, families can be supported through more formalised systems such as Annual Reviews and Attendance Meetings/Contracts.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, the Head Teacher will speak to Local Authorities with a view to considering placement/options.

We will action as a SENSE team

Day 1: First-Day Calling by SENSE team

1. Attendance Check: Teacher takes attendance during the morning register
2. Unexplained Absences: If a student is absent without prior notice:
 - FLO to oversee that contact is made with the parent/carer by phone within 30 minutes of the start of the school day.
 - If contact is successful, confirm the reason for absence and record it in the system.
 - If no contact is made, send a follow-up message (text or email) to the parent/carer requesting an immediate response.
 - If learner is CLA home visit attempted if no contact.
 - If any safeguarding concerns are current alert DSL to absence and dynamically assess actions

Day 2: Follow-up and Monitoring

1. Unexplained Absence Continues:
 - If the absence remains unexplained, attempt another phone call to the parent/carer by 9.30am.
 - Send a second email or text reminding them to provide a reason for the absence and warn of potential escalation if there's no response.
 - If learner is CLA home visit attempted if no contact.

Day 3: Escalation and Home Visit Consideration

1. Escalation:
 - FLO to oversee that contact is made with the parent/carer again, emphasising the seriousness of the situation and the need for an immediate explanation.
 - Alert a DSL or senior member of staff.
2. If the absence remains unexplained and there's no contact, consider scheduling a home visit and inform Local Authority Welfare Officer for support and advice.

Day 4: Continued Absence

1. Attendance Meeting Scheduled:
 - Schedule a meeting with the parent/carer to discuss the absence and explore any issues or barriers to attendance.
 - Send a formal letter home explaining the potential consequences of continued absence.

2. External Agency Involvement: Begin the process of involving external agencies, such as social services or local authorities, if the absence raises safeguarding concerns.

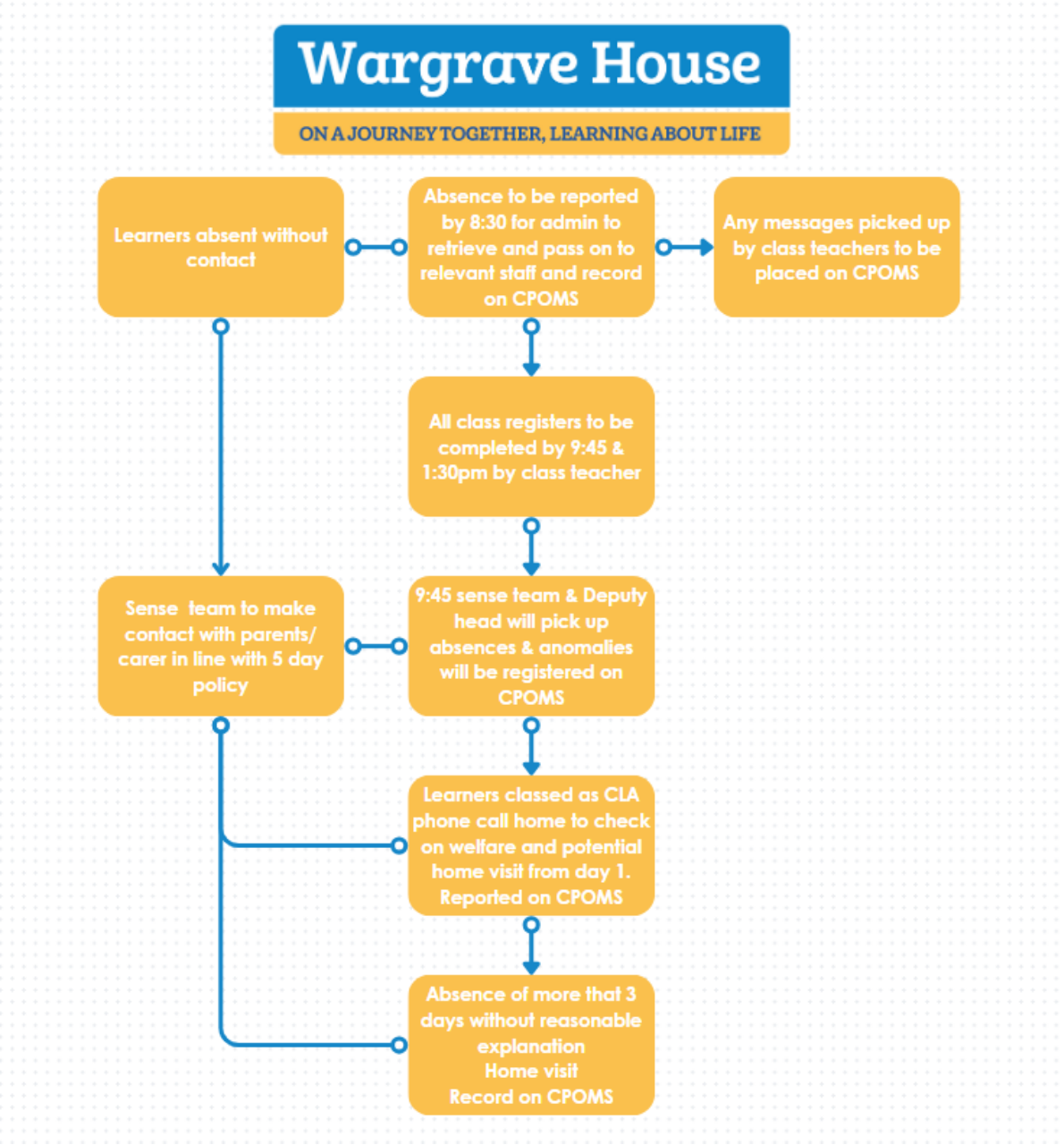
Day 5: Final Steps

1. Persistent Absence Procedures:
 - If the absence persists and remains unexplained, initiate procedures for dealing with persistent absences, which may involve a formal attendance plan, legal steps, or referrals.
2. Ongoing Monitoring: Keep monitoring attendance closely and provide daily reports to the senior leadership team

Policy Impact

We have a rolling programme for reviewing our Company policies. We regularly review the impact of our policies on the needs, entitlements and outcomes for students, service users, staff and parents.

Appendix 1 – Flow Chart



Appendix 2 – Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|--|---|--|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| Attending a place other than the school | | |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| V | Attending an educational visit or trip | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school |
| P | Participating in a sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| W | Attending work experience | Pupil is on an approved work experience placement |
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity | Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| Absent – leave of absence | | |
| C1 | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| J1 | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| S | Study leave | Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination |
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| C2 | Part-time timetable | Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable |
| C | Exceptional circumstances | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| Absent – other authorised reasons | | |
| T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health) |
| E | Suspended or excluded | Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made |
| Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause | | |
| Q | Lack of access arrangements | Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| | | arrangements to enable attendance at school |
| Y1 | Transport not available | Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available |
| Y2 | Widespread disruption to travel | Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency |
| Y3 | Part of school premises closed | Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open |
| Y4 | Whole school site unexpectedly closed | Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather) |
| Y5 | Criminal justice detention | Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention |
| Y6 | Public health guidance or law | Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law |
| Y7 | Any other unavoidable cause | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes |
| Absent – unauthorised absence | | |
| G | Holiday not granted by the school | Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| N | Reason for absence not yet established | Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes |
| O | Absent in other or unknown circumstances | No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence |
| U | Arrived in school after registration closed | Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session |
| Administrative codes | | |
| Z | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered |
| # | Planned whole-school closure | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays |