

WATFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR BOYS



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Headmaster's signature

7/5/19

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'I. A. ...', written over a horizontal line.

Chair of Governors' signature

7/5/19

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephen A Wake' in a cursive style, written over a horizontal line.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection policy, Online Safety policy, and Learner Agreements Years 7 -11 and 6th Form..

This attendance policy is developed to support the general aims and objectives stated in the core values published in the WBGs Strategic Plan and endorsed by the staff and Governors. In particular, this policy aims to realise these specific objectives:

- Maintain very high attendance figures compared with national averages. There is an expectation of 100% attendance unless a student is ill.
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance by regularly sharing attendance data with parents and emphasising the relationship between attendance and attainment.
- Celebrate good attendance by acknowledging individual and class achievements
- Promote good timekeeping and punctuality

Attendance

Regular and high attendance is important because data shows a direct link between underachievement and poor attendance. Students who attend school regularly make better progress, both socially and academically. They are more settled at school and find learning, school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.

The school Attendance Officer monitors student attendance and provides regular reports to the school Pastoral team on lates and absences, with action taken as appropriate. This includes identifying students whose attendance is below 90% and communicating with parents to highlight concerns, when attendance is falling. Student attendance rates are reported to all parents on a termly basis, through the school's online reporting system. There are regular reports on attendance to the Senior Leadership team and Governors.

Punctuality

The School sets high standards of punctuality. Parents should ensure their sons leave home early so as to arrive on time, thus avoiding any unexpected problems with traffic on roads or buses and trains.

Students should be in their form rooms for morning registration.

If a student arrives at school late they **MUST** sign in before they go into class. He should bring in a letter to the school office the following day explaining his lateness. Failure to do so may result in an "unexplained/unauthorised" absent mark on his register. Repeated late arrivals will result in a late detention.

Types of absence

Every half day of absence from school is classified by the school, not by the parent, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons such as:

- Illness

- Medical/dental appointments
- Emergencies
- Unavoidable causes

Where there is frequent absence due to illness the school may request that this is supported by medical evidence.

Dentist, optician, doctor or hospital appointments during school hours should be avoided, if possible. Appointment cards/letters must be provided beforehand if the appointment is during school hours and students must sign in/out at the school office. Students in Years 7 to 11 **MUST** be collected by an adult. The school does not permit any student from Years 7 to 11 to leave the school premises alone and appointments will be missed if no one arrives at school to collect the student.

Unauthorised absences are those for which permission has not been granted by the school in advance and do not fall in the categories above. Examples might include:

- Truancy
- Unexplained absence
- Students arriving at school after 9am
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been authorised by the school
- Parents allowing students to stay at home to revise or prepare for tests

Leave of absence

It is against school policy to take holidays during term time.

If a student needs to miss school for any occasion other than illness or an emergency, permission must be sought, in advance, by contacting the school Attendance Officer (see below).

The school has the authority not to authorise a request for a student to miss school for any reason.

The school does not and will not approve the removal of a pupil from school so that the family can take a holiday during term time.

Only parents/carers may request leave of absence for their child and only the school can approve such a request. In accordance with Department for Education policy, exceptions **may only** be made, and consent for absence given, where there are exceptional family circumstances or in the case of religious observance. Decisions about exceptional circumstances rest with the school.

In general the school will not authorise leave of absence for:

- family holidays
- religious observance exceeding three days in a given academic year
- weddings

- compassionate leave, other than for very close relatives

Parental communication of reasons for absence

The school has a dedicated absence reporting line so that parents can inform the school when their son is not able to attend school. Parents should telephone or email before 9:30am on each day that he does not attend, not just on the first day. If this is done on each day, there is no need for a written note when the student returns to school; otherwise, this is needed to explain the absence.

Absence line

Ring 01923 208900 or email absence@watfordboys.org

If a student is in school but not going to be in registration in the morning because of a music lesson, or route 121 support or some other reason, he must inform his Form Tutor and sign in at the School Office for music or sign in at the class.

If a student is absent, and the absence has not been explained, parents will receive an email shortly after the register is taken. Parents should provide information about the reason for any absence by email to absence@watfordboys.org as soon as is practical on that day. The school will follow up with parents on unexplained absence by a phone call or letter, as necessary.

Where the school is unconvinced about absence notes, the school will mark the absence as unauthorised and the onus is on parents to prove authenticity (e.g. doctor's note).

Persistent Absenteeism

A student becomes a persistent absentee if they miss 10% or more school sessions across the school year for whatever reason. Data shows that students who are regularly absent fall behind in academic attainment. The Department for Education states that ensuring regular and punctual attendance of students is the responsibility of parents. The school therefore requires the full support and cooperation of parents where persistent absenteeism is an issue.

We monitor absence thoroughly. Parents will be issued an 'at risk letter' where there is a risk of absenteeism exceeding 15 half day sessions in any two adjacent school terms. If this figure is exceeded the Local Authority may issue parents with a Penalty Notice.

The Penalty Notice requires a fine of £60 to be paid within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within the time limit the penalty rises to £120 which must be paid within 28 days.

If a parent is issued with a Penalty Notice it enables them to discharge their potential liability for an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 of failure to secure their child's regular attendance at school. If the fine is not paid they will be liable for prosecution for this offence.

Leavers

The school will only remove a pupil from the register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended.

If a pupil leaves and the School does not have information, about where they have gone, then the child is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education'. The school will notify the Local Authority who have a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies, to try and locate the child.

This policy reflects legislation at the time the policy was last reviewed. Any changes in legislation will take precedence over anything printed in this policy