

Attendance Leaflet for Parents



What are our responsibilities regarding attendance?

Attendance is a priority concern in our duty to 'safeguard' children.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly
- Promoting punctuality in attending school.

We believe that children can reach their full potential only by receiving full-time education through regular and structured attendance and punctuality.

Parents should expect to be challenged by the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team about any lateness and attendance concerns in-line with Government expectations cascaded to schools.

Our Targets

Our attendance targets are set in conjunction with the Education Safeguarding Service.

Students are expected to maintain a minimum **97%** attendance throughout the school year. Where attendance drops below 95%, or there are suspicious attendance patterns then the school will begin to track attendance. At this point the ESS considers a child - or school - to be causing concern. Students who drop to or below 90% are regarded as persistent absentees.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The school holiday dates are published at least a year in advance on the Somerset Council website and we ask parents/carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays. The Education Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Absence can only be authorised by the Head and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received. It is not the responsibility of the school to chase evidence for an absence.

Challenging absence

Attendance of all pupils is examined regularly. If there is a frequent pattern of absence or lateness the Headteacher or designated attendance lead will contact the parents/carers to inform them of the problem.

Where attendance patterns do not improve more letters may be issued or requests for medical evidence made. If there is a continuing problem then attendance meetings may be called where parents are asked into the school to discuss the barriers to their child(ren)'s good attendance. We are always keen to work alongside parents and children to successfully address any attendance concerns.

Where appropriate the school will involve its Education Welfare Officer in these proceedings. This may include the initiation of a warning period or the issuing of penalty notices.

The school may send attendance reminder letters to pupils under the age of 5. This is to help them form good attendance and punctuality habits at an early stage.

For more information on any of the areas mentioned see our full attendance policy on our website or ask for a copy from the school office.

Lateness

Registration begins at 8:50am, and students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L code). The register will close at 9:20am and students arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late (U code). This will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session. This form of absence will be followed up in the same manner as any other form of unauthorised absence; including following through to penalty notice if the problem is not addressed. We must stress that repeated lateness has a significant impact on children's readiness for school and their performance.

Afternoon registration is at 1:15pm, closing at 1:45pm and similar procedures will be observed.

If arriving after the close of register, parents/students must report to the front reception and sign in on the INVENTORY system so that their arrival time and reason for lateness is recorded. Punctuality is judged on arrival time, not method of entry. Students can come in through the normal gate and still be late.

Reporting an absence

Parents must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an explanation and an expected date of return. This call should be made by 9:00am. A message can be left on the answering machine if the phone is not answered. If the absence is more than 2 days in duration, then parents should contact the school again to keep them updated about the student's welfare and provide an expected date of return.

If a child is absent and no explanation has been received then the school will use the provided contact list in order to try and establish a reason for absence. If we cannot establish a reason to our satisfaction then we may instigate a welfare visit.

Children missing in education

Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education elsewhere. All children missing education are vulnerable. At Westonzoyland we comply with all guidance related to CME.