



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Wyvern Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Our belief at Wyvern College is that education is transformational and supports in building the character needed to flourish in all that they do. Excellent attendance is key to achieving this.

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. Therefore, for a student to reach their full educational achievement a high level of attendance is essential.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital they are at college, on time, every day the college is open. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at college are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Our policy outlines the impact of irregular attendance including: disruption to sequences of learning, undermining educational progress and impeding the child's ability to develop friendship groups within the academy. Improving attendance is in everyone's interests and it's everyone's business. As a result, this policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of academy attendance are well informed, with a particular emphasis on the need to work effectively together. We always consider the wider context of absence in relation to our safeguarding policy, and where necessary we work with other agencies to promote the safety and wellbeing of our pupils.

Aims

This policy aims:

- a) To raise the importance of good attendance in line with Ofsted requirements.
- b) Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- c) To improve punctuality.
- d) To promote a consistent approach across the school to all matters relating to attendance.
- e) To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance.
- f) To communicate to all relevant parties (staff, governors, parents, pupil) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised".
- g) To stress the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.
- h) Promote opportunities to celebrate and reward children for attendance and punctuality achievements.

Regular attendance at school is vital. Without it the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory. Irregular attendance leads to pupils missing important lessons and therefore not fulfilling their true potential.

Attendance is a national priority and all schools have to submit data electronically (both

in an aggregated form and on an individual pupil basis) every term. National data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance and high examination performance.

What is an acceptable attendance rate?

We aim to ensure that all students have over 97% attendance and we actively encourage students to aim for 100% attendance.

Sickness comes usually in a block of time over a continuous period, what we look at are unbroken weeks (i.e. those where the pupil is not marked present on all 10 sessions). Pupils should not have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of the academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the school.

There are occasions when absence is unavoidable. These include illness, medical appointments, or education appointments. If a parent knows in advance of absence due to an appointment, the academy office should be informed, and the appointment card shown.

If a child is ill, the parent or carer should ring the college to inform us on 023 80692679.

If parents or carers require additional support regarding attendance they can contact the child's Pastoral Leader. Parents or carers should continue to update the attendance officer by phone for every further day of absence. If we do not receive communication about absence, the parent or carer will be called, and a text message will be sent home. If no suitable explanation is provided, the absence will be classed as an unauthorised absence.

Recording Attendance and Punctuality to School

Legally the register must be marked twice daily, this is once at the start of the college day (8.25) and once in the afternoon of the college day (12.25).

Punctuality and Lateness

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of college and lessons are used to give out important information. If your child is late they can miss work, vital information, support and mentoring sessions as well as to cause disruption to the lesson for others.

Points to Note

- The school day begins at 8.25am and all students are expected to be in college at this time. Morning registration is at 8.30am and it closes at 8.55am;
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary;
- Arrival after the close of registration at 9.25am will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with county and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence; **it will also mean that a maximum of 50% attendance for that day will be possible.**
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible GP and dental appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and may be subject to legal action.

Parents of students who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time-keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents will be invited to attend a meeting at the college with the Tutor or Pastoral Leader to discuss the problem and support on offer.

Authorised absences

Acceptable reasons include sickness, hospital appointments, dentist appointments, recognised religious holidays (1 day per holiday only) and funerals. Medical appointments should be arranged outside of the academy day, if possible. Where this is not possible, we would expect pupils to miss only part of the day.

Valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:

- When a child is significantly ill or receiving medical attention.
- Days of religious observance notified in advance.
- Absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness).

There are other absences, such as “Approved Sporting Activity” that can be authorised and there will be events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from school and professional discretion will need to be used in these cases about whether the absence can be authorised. This will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Parents are expected to call and notify the school on each day of absence, otherwise, this may result in the absence being unauthorised.

Medical Evidence

This will be required to authorize an absence for any student with attendance under 95%

Example of evidence

1. Appointment card detailing the date of absence
2. Prescription detailing the date of absence
3. Medication detailing the date of absence
4. Hospital or specialist letter or appointment card

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours where possible. In avoidable circumstances, students are expected to attend school before or after their appointment time. For example, if the appointment is at 11:00am the student will be expected to attend school at the normal starting time and leave in time to travel for their appointment or if the appointment is at 9:00am the student is expected to attend school after the appointment.

Unauthorised absences

Unacceptable reasons include shopping, going to an appointment, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, parent/carer unwell and taking holiday, for example by acquiring cheaper flights outside of academy holidays.

Unauthorised absences are those where:

- No letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parent(s)/carer(s).
- The reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.

The DfE guidelines state that the following activities would classify as **unauthorised**:

- Minding the house.
- Caring for relatives.
- Awaiting repair people.
- Shopping.
- A birthday or family celebration.
- Unauthorised holiday.
- Parental illness.
- Excessive illness without a medical reason.

The DfE's guidelines look at the area of "Special Occasions" and make clear that only **truly exceptional** occasions should be classified as authorised. This will be decided at the discretion of the Headteacher. We ask parents to **notify the school well in advance** (preferably 4 weeks notice) of any proposed special occasion to ascertain whether the school would view the reason for absence as valid or not. The DfE's guidelines make it plain that, in the final analysis, it is the **school** that judges whether an absence is authorised or not. **A note from home therefore does not automatically make an absence valid/justified/authorised.**

Example of 'exceptional circumstances' include:

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – Principals use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled.
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence.
- Serious illness of a close relative – only if Principal is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional. Teenage parents responsible for the care of their own child – at the Principal's discretion.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the LA – as appropriate.
- Time-off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by Education Social Work Service.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs". This would include the Islamic Eids, as well as religious observance days of the orthodox Christian, Jewish and other religions. Principals may specify that only one day will be authorised at a time.
- Weddings of parents and siblings – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however, we acknowledge that there are times when the

dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Principal is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Principal may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulty if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, considering the overall welfare of the child.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional:

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Pilgrimages by parents (e.g. Hajj). These are rare but can result in children being away from school for significant periods of time (at least 5 days). They are not regarded as exceptional as children themselves do not perform Hajj, but tend to travel with their parents when they go.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitment.
- To care for other family members.
- Birthdays.
- To interpret for other family members.
- No school uniform/shoes.
- Bullying.
- Friendship problems.
- Head lice.
- Learning difficulties.
- Family holiday.
- Family Anniversaries.
- Death of a pet.
- Travel problems.
- School refusal.

Data and monitoring

We rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance at an individual and cohort level as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve issues before they become entrenched. Table 1 outlines the data we use, who analyses it and how frequently it is monitored.

What Data?	Who Monitors the data?	Frequency
Whole college daily absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Officer • Pastoral Leaders • Pastoral Assistants 	Daily
Individual Pupil Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form Tutor • Pupil • Attendance Officer • Pastoral Team (When required) 	Weekly
Tutor Group Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form Tutor • Pastoral Leads 	Weekly
Year Group Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral Leads • SLT Link 	Weekly

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Head Pastoral (When Required) 	Half Termly
Pupils at risk of becoming or are PA (persistently absent – missing nearly 10% of all school days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance Officer Pastoral Leads SLT Link 	Weekly / Bi-Weekly
Pupils with EHCP's and SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pastoral Leads SENDCo SLT Link (When required) 	Half Termly
Pupils at risk of becoming or are SA (severely absent – missing nearly 50% or more of all school days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance Officer Deputy Headteacher Pastoral Safeguarding Team 	Half Termly
Cohort analysis (year groups, pupil premium, SEND) compared with Regional and National trends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Headteacher Pastoral Headteacher 	Half Termly Yearly

We also regularly communicate with parents and carers about their child's attendance. Year-to-date attendance scores are shared every term as part of progress report and discussed with tutors. Where attendance is a concern parents will be invited to an Early Help meeting to discuss patterns in attendance, the needs of the child and family, and what support can be offered. Where attendance is consistently high or where there has been sustained improvement in attendance, parents will be informed through our approach to rewards and recognition.

The table below outlines the number of days, weeks and number of lessons missed for the 95%, 90% and 85% attendance across the school year. All families, children and staff should know that poor attendance translates into many missed lessons and days in school, resulting in fewer opportunities to learn and develop their character. The data in Table 2 is shared with parents at the beginning of every academic year and is regularly revisited with pupils:

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of Days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed	Which means, on average, this number of grades lower in each of your GCSE subjects
95%	9 days	2 weeks	45 lessons	1 grade lower
90%	19 days	4 weeks	95 lessons	2 grades lower
85%	29 days	6 weeks	145 lessons	3 grades lower

Continued or On-going Absence

The following table outlines how Wyvern college works with pupils and families to promote excellent attendance and highlights who is responsible for monitoring and improving attendance at each trigger point.

Attendance will be monitored and analysed every half term.

Attendance	Who monitors and supports	Actions likely to be taken
97%-100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form Tutor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form Tutor informs pupils every week of their attendance score for the previous week and overall After the first day of absence tutors ask pupils reasons for their absence. Families notify the academy on the first day and every other day of absence.
95%-97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form Tutor Attendance Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil 1 to 1 conversations Tutor continues actions above
Below 94%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form Tutor Attendance Officer Pastoral Leader/Assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 1 Letter sent Families are invited to meet the Tutor/Attendance Officer/PL/PA The voice of the child is heard to identify any barriers causing absence The college works with the family to support sustained improvement through formalised support An attendance contract with targets is set up and monitored for a minimum of 4 weeks.
Below 90% (Persistent Absentee - PA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pastoral Leader Pastoral Assistant Attendance officer SLT Link 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 2 Letter is sent Parents are invited to a formal school attendance review with the PL/SLT Link Previous attendance contract is reviewed with adapted targets set for weekly review over a 4-week period All absence must now be authorised with medical evidence. Calls are made to any Absent PA in the morning of any absence to encourage attendance (on that day if possible)
Below 80% (On way to Severe Absentee - SA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLT Link Attendance Officer Deputy Headteacher Pastoral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 3 Letter Sent Final School attendance review meeting with parents is completed Final attendance contract initiated, final targets set for weekly review over a 4-week period Calls are made to any Absent SA in the morning of any absence to encourage attendance (on that day if possible)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If no improvements are seen, a Formal Warning Notice may be sent and/or a referral to the Education Legal Intervention Team, who may choose to issue a fixed penalty notice or prosecution.
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Promoting Good Attendance

- The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the college, parents and the students. The Home/College agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.
- To help us all to focus on this we will:
- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our newsletter;
- Report to you on how your child is performing in college, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their progress and attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance in tutor groups and in assemblies;
- Reward good or improving attendance;
- Celebrate 100% attendance in Success Assemblies.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Wyvern College

Wyvern College has a statutory duty to ensure all parents understand the importance of good attendance and to hold parents accountable for the good attendance of their children. Securing excellent attendance and punctuality, alongside the safety and welfare of Wyvern students is everyone's responsibility.

Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Leader, Pastoral Leaders and Pastoral Assistants

A member of the Senior Leadership Team (Pastoral Assistant Headteacher) will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the college's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the college. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that pastoral and other relevant support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with Wyvern College.

Responsibilities of Tutors and Subject Teachers

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately;
- Promote and reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities;
- Liaise with the Pastoral Leader and Attendance Leader on matters of attendance and punctuality and communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Meet with Parents if required to discuss their child's attendance

Responsibilities of Students

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in college on time;
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time;
- Take responsibility for registering at the Student Services desk if they are late;
- Sign out at the welfare office if leaving the college site during college hours.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility (The Education Act 1996) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the college on the first day of absence;
- Discuss with the Tutor and/or Pastoral Leader any planned absences well in advance;
- Complete a request for leave of absence form, where appropriate; and only request a leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- Support the college with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year;
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable;
- Avoid taking their child out of college for non-urgent medical or dental appointments;
- Do not collect students from school for pupil 'illness' without awaiting communication from the school.

Request for Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: (Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, short-term or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents wishing to apply for leave of

absence need to fill in an application form available on the college website in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire's Code of Conduct, parents will be issued with a fixed Penalty Notice fine, or other legal action in accordance the code.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out of school during school time.

Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

In Education law, parents are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of a child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness:

Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:

1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance;
2. The child has 20 or more sessions (10 school days) of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures are for students of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings;
- Parenting orders;
- Penalty Notices;
- Education Supervision Orders;
- Prosecution through the Magistrates' Court.

Legal Measures for absence taken when the Headteacher has declined a parental request for leave of absence:

Where a student has unauthorised absence due to either:

1. Non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
2. A holiday that has been taken without permission and the unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions, then a Penalty Notice for non-attendance will be issued. to each parent.

Where a child has unauthorised absence the school must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-

Attendance (please see link below) The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority.

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

Securing excellent attendance and punctuality, alongside the safety and welfare of Wyvern students is everyone's responsibility. Please contact the school if further support is required to ensure that your child has excellent attendance.