



Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2023-24

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Policy Notes

Policy may be subject to review and revision at any time by the Wallington Local Governing Body notwithstanding that the next review date has not been reached.

Review dates are for guidance only and whilst the intention is always to arrange reviews within the stated time frame all Policy Notes will remain in force until this has taken place and been formally approved by the Wallington Local Governing Body.

REVIEW

Last Reviewed: January 2023

To be Reviewed: January 2026

1. Aims of this policy

Wallington High School for Girls aims to encourage and assist all students to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. We will work together with all stakeholders in order to ensure the achievement of high levels of attendance and punctuality for all students. Our intention is to enable all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour for Learning Policy. This policy is based on DfE guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (2022): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> (Appendix 4) and DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2023) (Appendix 5).

Good attendance and punctuality at school is vital for students to achieve their full educational potential. Students with good attendance records benefit in the following ways:

- continuity of learning which makes progress and retention easier;
- enhanced performance in examinations;
- continuity of relationships and friendships;
- good references for further education or employment;
- good habits are formed for later life;
- emotional wellbeing and health benefits.

It is expected that all students aim for at least 97% attendance each year. At WHSG:

- 97-100% attendance is defined as **expected**
- 95 – 96% attendance is defined as **satisfactory**
- Below 95% but above 90% is defined as **a cause for concern**
- Below 90% is defined as **a serious cause for concern**

The school understands that there are exceptional circumstances when levels of attendance may fall below 97% or even 95% for reasons beyond the student or parents' control, however these are very rare.

A student's progress is severely hampered if they do not regularly attend school. Where absence escalates and students miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), this is classed as 'persistent absence' (PA) by the DfE. If this continues from Years 7 to 11, a total of six months' education will be lost. An attendance record of 80% is equal to 1 day missed per week. If this continues from Years 7 to 11, a total of one year's education will be lost. Students who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school) are classed as 'severely absent' (SA). It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure that their child attends school on time every day that the school is open.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The School

Wallington High School for Girls expects students to attend school regularly and to arrive on time in a fit condition to learn. We will encourage excellent attendance and will investigate all unexplained and unjustified absenteeism. Should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern, we will work closely with parents/carers and provide appropriate support in order to improve attendance and /or punctuality.

We encourage good attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- school targets are set and individual targets are set where necessary;
- attendance information is sent to parents/carers regularly to assist them in monitoring their child's attendance;
- regular promotion of excellent attendance in assemblies, the student bulletin, the 'Wallington Week', Parents' Information Evenings and at Parents' Evenings;
- termly analysis of attendance figures and trends for individuals, Year Groups and the whole school;
- termly reports to Governors;
- computerised registration system which allows every lesson to be monitored;
- an Attendance Officer dedicated to the administration of attendance including the follow-up of absence and lateness;
- contact with parents/carers on the first day of absence;
- a working partnership with the Borough's Schools Attendance Service;
- support for students and parents/carers where attendance and/or punctuality difficulties are emerging;
- attendance and punctuality as the responsibility of a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

2.2 Students

Students will ensure that they attend school regularly and on time. They will attend all lessons punctually and will not leave the school without permission. They will follow the procedures outlined in their planners for any requests for absence or appointments during the school day.

Where appropriate, students will bring in notes from parents/carers to explain absence and pass to the pastoral office for entry onto the registration system.

2.3 Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance and informing school of the reason for any absence on the first morning of any absence as per the DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance' (2022).

Parents/carers can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record. Parents/carers play a very important role in ensuring the good attendance records of their child. Below is a list of suggested strategies:

- encourage full attendance;
- stress the importance of full attendance to your child;
- do not allow your child to have time off for minor complaints or illnesses: if they are well enough to be up and about they are generally well enough to attend school;
- monitor your child's attendance report carefully;
- try to book any medical or dental appointments out of school hours or make them for the very end of the day;
- ensure your child is punctual to school;
- inform the school of any absence;
- take any family holidays in school holidays, not during term time;
- if your child seems unwilling to attend, contact the school as soon as possible: do not let your child stay at home as this could set a precedent for the future.

3. Process of recording attendance

Registration is completed in each lesson using SIMS Lesson Monitor. Guidelines for marking the register in SIMS Lesson Monitor are in the staff handbook and all new staff are trained in the process.

The legally required morning and afternoon register is taken in registration period at 8.25am and in Period 5 at 2.00pm. If a student in Years 7-11 arrives after the register closes at 8.25am, they should report to reception to sign in and register. The School's Attendance Officer will mark the student as late on the register (L) and record the reason for lateness. If a student in Sixth Form arrives after the register closes at 8.25am, they should report to reception and use their electronic entry card to tap in on the reception reader (Year 12s who have not yet been issued with their card must present to Reception and sign in there).

If a student registers after 8.45am then this will be recorded as an absence for the morning session and the parent will be required to provide an explanation for the absence. The attendance team records all absences in accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) national codes (see Appendix D).

4. Process for recording student absence

The School's Attendance Officer (Years 7-11) or Sixth Form Administrator (Sixth Form) must be informed on the first day of absence before 8.45am via email from the parent/carer (sent from the same email address currently notified to us on our administrative system), and **every subsequent day** before 8.45am if the absence continues. If there is no communication from parents/carers, then this will be automatically recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If your child has to leave school for an appointment during the school day please email the school at least 48 hours (two school days) in advance and include "appointment" in the subject of the email. To ensure the safeguarding of all our students we are unable to let a student leave school without parent/carer consent in Years 7-11.

Please contact the School's Attendance Officer (Years 7-11) or Sixth Form Administrator (Sixth Form) using this email address – attendance@wallingtongirls.org.uk

The following absences may be treated as authorised by the school:

- Illness
- Medical or dental appointment (Parents/carers are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Where possible the student should only be out of school for a minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.)
- Religious observance
- Close family bereavement
- Leave of absence authorised by the school
- Suspension

If a student has an unexpected absence:

We expect parents/carers to contact the school using the processes explained above. If no contact is received by parents/carers, the School's Attendance Officer (Years 7-11) and the Sixth Form Administrator (Sixth Form) will contact parents/carers of students with an unexplained absence on the first day of the absence. If no response is received by the end of the school day the School's Attendance Officer (Years 7-11) and the Sixth Form Administrator (Sixth Form) will call parents/carers.

If the absence continues in to the second day and no information has been received from parents/carers, the Head of Year will call the parents/carers.

If the absence continues in to a third day and no information has been received from parents/carers, the Assistant Headteacher/ Director of Sixth Form will contact parents to support a return to school and a meeting may be requested.

In addition, unauthorised absences, including truancy, are recorded on the register in the same way. Thus, future employers, colleges or universities will not be able to differentiate between different unauthorised absences and may decide that the attendance record shows a lack of commitment to education and professionalism.

5. Requests for leave of absence

Requests for leave of absence are not generally granted. If there are very exceptional circumstances where parents/carers must request a leave of absence, they must do so by completing an Application for Student Leave Form and writing to the Headteacher, including relevant evidence e.g. medical certificate, letter from employers etc. It is expected that requests will be made at least **two weeks** in advance. Parents/carers should obtain an Application for Student Leave Form (see Appendix B) from reception or from the school website. On receipt of the completed form, the Headteacher, in consultation with the School's Attendance Officer, will decide whether to authorise or not, and will write to parents/carers. Each request will be considered individually.

If the request is granted, the expected date of the student's return will be included in the letter. It is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday, trip or extended period of leave. If a student is absent during this period, it will be recorded as unauthorised and the following action will be taken:

- Parents/carers will receive a letter from the Headteacher;
- Parents/carers will be asked to attend a meeting or attendance clinic in school;
- The matter will be referred to the Attendance Service at Cognus for consideration for a Penalty Notice (See Appendix A).

The school reserves the right to request evidence to authorise any absences. This could include but is not exclusive to medical evidence, an appointment card or letter or details of travel arrangements. If the absence is caused by prolonged illness, the Form Tutor and/or Head of Year will liaise with parents/ carers to provide work. In severe cases the school will refer the case to the Attendance Service at Cognus to support parents/carers and students.

6. Monitoring attendance and punctuality

School attendance and punctuality data is monitored daily and weekly by the Form Tutor, half termly by Heads of Year, the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Student Support and Behaviour and the Director of Sixth Form, and termly by the Headteacher and Governors. The school will benchmark attendance data against local, regional and national levels to identify areas for improvement. Attendance is reported to the Local and Trust Governing Bodies. The school sets annual targets for overall attendance figures in the Autumn Term each year. Attendance data is submitted to the DfE on a termly basis.

Good punctuality to both lessons and to school is expected of all students. We know that employers place great importance on punctuality and attendance and it is important for our students to understand the value of being on time. We recognise that parents/carers play a vital role and have a legal responsibility to ensure good punctuality and we aim to identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents/carers, students and other agencies to resolve any punctuality problems.

7. Supporting attendance and punctuality

When attendance data highlights issues with individual students' attendance immediate intervention is provided, targeted, monitored and evaluated by the Form Tutor and/or Head of Year. Below is the process the school employs to monitor and support students' attendance:

Years 7 to 11

Attendance Cause for Concern

- Form Tutors will contact parents when attendance falls below 95%. The school will work closely in partnership with parents/carers to build strong relationships to address any in or out of school barriers to attendance and or punctuality. Heads of Year may ask parents to provide a medical certificate in cases where the student has a persistent absence.

Stage 1

- Heads of Year will contact parents/carers when attendance falls below 90% and a Stage One Letter will be sent home.

Stage 2

- Should attendance continue to decline, then a Stage Two Letter will be sent home and a meeting arranged with parents/carers and the Head of Year/ Education Welfare Officer. The school will work closely in partnership with parents and external agencies to build strong relationships to address any in or out of school barriers to attendance and or punctuality.

Stage 3

- If attendance does not improve the school will seek to work with external organisations and the Local Authority to help to remove barriers to school attendance.
- If this support has not been effective or has not been engaged with the school will work with the Local Authority to put formal support in place in the form of a Stage Three Letter, parenting contract or education supervision order and/or the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Sixth Form

An absolute minimum of 90% attendance for each subject is required by all students to guarantee entry to the relevant examinations. The school reserves the right not to enter students who fall below this level of attendance.

Attendance Cause for Concern

- Form Tutors will contact parents when attendance falls below 95%. The school will work closely in partnership with parents/carers to build strong relationships to address any in or out of school barriers to attendance and or punctuality. The Sixth Form team may ask parents to provide a medical certificate from a professional in cases where the student has a persistent absence.

Stage 1

- The Sixth Form Administrator or Assistant Head of Year will contact parents/carers when attendance falls below 92% and a Stage One Letter will be sent home and a phone call arranged with parents/carers.

Stage 2

- Should attendance continue to decline, then a Stage Two Letter will be sent home and a meeting arranged with parents/carers and the Head of Year/Student Support Officer. The school will work closely in partnership with parents and external agencies to build strong relationships to address any in or out of school barriers to attendance.

Stage 3

- If attendance does not improve the Director of Sixth Form will seek to work with students and parents to help to remove barriers to school attendance. A Stage Three Letter will be issued during a parent meeting and an attendance contract will be implemented. Attendance below 90% for each subject may result in a student's withdrawal from exam entry.

Stage 4

- Where an attendance contract has not been successful a meeting will take place with the Deputy Head of School and Director of Sixth Form to discuss the student's place at the Sixth Form.

Statutory intervention

Once the school has exhausted all avenues of support and it is not working or being engaged with, the Headteacher will refer to the Local Authority for consideration of intervention or prosecution to protect the student's right to an education. Local authorities have the power to serve each parent with a Penalty Notice where: overall absence, within the previous six months, has fallen to 85% or below (15% or more absence); at least 50% of that absence remaining unauthorised; or, where there have been at least 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within the previous six weeks.

The penalty for each parent is £60 for each child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days. Penalty Notices apply to pupils of statutory school age, which finishes on the last Friday in June of Year 11. Further information regarding a Penalty Notice can be found on the London Borough of Sutton Website:

https://www.sutton.gov.uk/documents/20124/214425/PN_Code_of_Conduct_SEPT_18.pdf/476d3b79-ffb7-9408-18ed-18ac2bf32fed

What can I do if my child is starting to present with attendance difficulties?

These difficulties can present themselves in a number of different ways e.g. a reluctance to go to school, feigning illness, failure to attend school despite arriving to school, missing lessons whilst in school etc. If a problem seems to be emerging parents/carers should:

- talk to your child to try to ascertain if there are any problems or worries at school, on the journey to or from school or at home;
- contact the Form Tutor or Head of Year as soon as possible;
- seek advice from the Borough Schools' Attendance Service (BSAS);
- seek advice from appropriate websites such as Family Lives (formerly Parentline) – www.familylives.org.uk and Advisory Centre for Education - www.ace-ed.org.uk
- attend parent workshops.

Below is the process the school employs to monitor and support students' punctuality:

Years 7 to 11

Stage 1

- If a student in Years 7-11 arrives after the register closes at 8.25am, they should report to reception to sign in and register.
- The Attendance Officer will mark the student as late on the register (L) and record the reason for lateness.
- Unless there is an exceptional reason, the student will receive a negative point and a 20 minute Late Detention which will be sat that day.
- Parents/carers will receive a School Comms message informing them that their child has been late to school and that they have a detention.

Stage 2

- If a student in Years 7-11 is late to school more than 3 times in a half-term, and without a valid reason, they will receive a 60 minute detention and will be placed on a late report card.
- Parents/carers will be contacted by the Form Tutor informing them of the detention and late report card.
- The student must not be late in the immediate 2 weeks after the student has been taken off report – this will be monitored by the Form Tutor and Head of Year. If the student is late they may be escalated to Stage 3.

Stage 3

- If there is no improvement in the number of lates to school a Headteacher's detention will be set and the student will be placed on red report to an Assistant Headteacher.
- Parents/ carers will be contacted by the Assistant Headteacher and a meeting will be arranged.

Sixth Form

Cause for Concern

Arriving between 8.25am - 8.45am

- If a student in Sixth Form arrives after the register closes at 8.25am, they should use their electronic entry card to tap in on the reception reader and report to the Sixth Form Attendance Officer.
- If a student is late twice in a week (but arrives by 8.45am), the student will receive a 30-minute detention on a Friday after-school the following week.
- If a student is late three times or more in a week (but arrives by 8.45am) the student will receive up to a 2-hour detention on a Friday after-school the following week.

Arriving after 8.45am

- If a student in Sixth Form arrives after 8.45am, they should use their electronic entry card to tap in on the reception reader and report to the Sixth Form Attendance Officer.
- Lateness beyond 8.45am will result in a 60-minute detention on a Friday after-school the following week. If lateness occurs twice or more in a week, a 2-hour detention will be issued on a Friday after-school the following week.

Stage 1 – Formal Verbal Warning

- When a student reaches 6 late marks (this includes am/pm registration or to lessons) a Stage 1 Late Report will be issued by the Sixth Form Attendance Officer.
- Students will be removed from Late Report on completion of a successful report period.
- Students that fail to meet the requirements of the Stage 1 Report will either have their late report extended or escalated to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Written Formal Warning

- Students that fail to meet the requirements of their Stage 1 Late Report or continue with persistently poor punctuality will be moved to a Stage 2 Written Warning.
- A meeting with students, parents/carers and the Head of Year/Assistant Head of Year will take place to discuss barriers to punctuality and a 3-week Punctuality Plan will be implemented. Study leave privileges will be removed for the 3-week period.

Stage 3 – Final Written Warning

- If a student has failed to respond to the Punctuality Plan outlined in Stage 2 then a formal meeting will take place between the student, Director of Sixth Form and the parents/ carers. A Pastoral Support Plan will be agreed and shared with relevant parties, considering any extenuating circumstances. This will include reporting to the Director of Sixth Form at 8.15am each morning and the removal of lunchtime and home study privileges for a period of time, until an improvement is seen in punctuality and the Pastoral Support Plan is reviewed.

Stage 4

- If there is no improvement in the number of late marks to school, despite all of the previous stages of intervention, then the student and parents/ carers will meet with the Deputy Head of School and Director of Sixth Form to discuss the student's place at the Sixth Form.

If a student has been on report for lateness and begins the new term and incurs a number of lates, the Head of Year has the right to escalate the student to the next level if appropriate and if verified by the Assistant Headteacher in charge of Attendance.

The school understands that many students travel by public transport and will take any known serious delays into consideration when reviewing a student's punctuality record.

Parents/ carers are reminded that it is part of the Home School Agreement that parents/carers 'ensure your child attends school regularly (holidays in term time cannot be authorised)' and that they are 'on time'.

8. Students with medical or special educational needs

Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have a special educational need or disabilities. The right to an education is the same for all students and therefore the attendance ambition for these students should be the same as for other students. However, when working to improve attendance with these students the school should be mindful of the different barriers faced and put in additional support in place where necessary to help them to access their full-time education.

This can include:

- Making reasonable adjustments and consider specific approaches with parents
- Putting in place a Health Care Plan or Educational Health Care Plan
- Consider working with external partners
- Making referrals where appropriate
- Consider removal of barriers such as uniform or lunchtime arrangements
- Consider time limited phased return to school
- Ensure data is monitored regularly and targeted meetings occur

We will ensure that students unable to attend school because of health needs can access suitable and flexible education appropriate to their needs. The nature of the provision is responsive to the demands of what may be a changing health status. Each case will be based on a personalised approach but will always involve liaison between the school, student and parents / carers. The lead person in each case will be the Head of Year but students with medical needs will also be monitored by the allocated SLT member and the SENDCo.

Guidance in the DfE document 'Supporting students at school with medical conditions' - Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England (2015), is followed for all students with medical needs.

The 'First Aid & Medical Room Procedures', available in the First Aid Room, details the school's medical procedures.

9. Children missing education

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered students at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Under DfE guidance 'Children missing education: Statutory guidance for local authorities' September 2016, schools are obliged to investigate any student who fails to attend school. The London Borough of Sutton procedures will be followed where investigations fail to establish good reason for absence of more than 10 days.

Attendance is monitored through the daily registers. Monitoring of attendance occurs on a daily basis and is carried out by the Attendance Officer (Years 7-11) or Sixth Form Administrator (Sixth Form). Further monitoring takes place on a weekly, monthly and half termly basis by the Heads of Year. All unexplained absences are investigated. Following school action, which may include an attendance meeting with parents / carers, poor attendance may be referred to the Attendance Service at Cognus.

We will notify the London Borough of Sutton if a student is to be taken off the school roll or if a parent / carer decides to home school their child.

We will arrange full-time education for excluded students from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion.

As per KCSIE (2023) 'children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.' If no explanation of unauthorised absence for an extended period occurs we will consult with the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).

CODE OF CONDUCT

Penalty Notices

For Parents of Pupils Absent from School

Education Act 1996 and Education and Inspections Act 2006



1.	INTRODUCTION
1.1	The purpose of this Local Code of Conduct is to ensure that statutory powers are applied consistently and fairly across the Local Authority area and that suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the issuing of Penalty Notices.
1.2	The Government requires Local Authorities to issue a Code of Conduct to all schools.
1.3	This Code of Conduct has been written in light of ‘Guidance on Education-Related Parenting Contracts, Parenting Orders and Penalty Notices’ - Revised Edition 2015; and Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.(Amendment 2016), Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Coronavirus)(Amendment) Regulations 2021.
1.4	<p>The London Borough of Sutton Code has been agreed following consultation with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutton Local Authority – School Attendance Service; • Representatives from Governing Bodies and Headteachers of Sutton Schools; • The Sutton division of the Metropolitan Police Service; • South London Legal Partnership (SLLP) Legal Services. <p>This is in accordance with the The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004(Amendment) Regulations 2013 and Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 Section 23 Subsection (1).</p>
1.5	Anyone issuing a Penalty Notice to a parent ¹ of a child of statutory school age on roll at a Sutton school, must do so within the terms of this Code.
1.6	The key consideration in deciding whether to issue a Penalty Notice will be whether it can be effective in helping to improve the pupil’s attendance. The School Attendance Service will also consider whether the Local Authority is likely to be willing and able to prosecute, should the parent fail to pay the penalty.
2.	LEGISLATION
2.1	The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 inserts into the Education Act 1996 Section 444A and Section 444B enabling authorised personnel to issue Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution under Section 444, and enable parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty.
2.2	<p style="text-align: center;">What is a Penalty Notice?</p> <p>Penalty Notices are fines that can be issued by a Local Authority or a school to parents for their child's unauthorised absence from school.</p>

¹ All those defined as a parent under Section 576 Education Act 1996 are parents for the purpose of these provisions. This means that all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law. ‘Parent’ means each and every parent coming within the definition (whether acting jointly or separately) and should not be taken to mean that provisions only apply to ‘parent’ in the singular. As with prosecutions under Section 444 Education Act 1996 a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence.

2.3	<p>When is a Penalty Notice appropriate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents of a registered pupil whose child fails to attend school regularly, without reasonable justification, are committing an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A Penalty Notice for irregular attendance can be issued where the parent is capable of, but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance. Where a parent fails, without a reasonable excuse, to ensure that their excluded child is not present in a public place during school hours in the first five days of any exclusion, then she or he is committing an offence under Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
2.4	<p>The education-related provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 apply to all parents who fall within the definition set out in Section 576 of the Education 1996. This defines 'parent' as:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) all natural parents, whether they are married or not; (ii) any person who, although they are not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person; (iii) any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.
2.5	<p>Specific Conditions</p>
	<p>Children Looked After: The London Borough of Sutton does not include Children Looked After in the Penalty Notice process. Where there are concerns over attendance with a child within the London Borough of Sutton or other Local Authority care, a review should be held to determine that appropriate provision is in place and whether changes need to be made to better engage the young person with their education.</p>
	<p>Special Educational Needs (SEN): For pupils with an Education Health & Care Plan, an early review should be held before considering a Penalty Notice or other legal action. This is to determine that appropriate provision is in place and whether changes need to be made to better engage the young person with their education.</p>
3.	<p>RATIONALE</p>
3.1	<p>Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. In law an offence occurs if a parent fails to secure a child's attendance at school at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school. Parents are supported at school and Local Authority level to overcome barriers to regular attendance.</p>
4.	<p>AUTHORISATION TO ISSUE PENALTY NOTICES</p>
4.1	<p>Primary responsibility for issuing Penalty Notices rests with the Local Authority through the School Attendance Service.</p>
4.2	<p>In Sutton it has been agreed that the Police will not issue Penalty Notices to parents of truants, and neither will schools. If Headteachers feel it appropriate that a Penalty Notice is served, they therefore must consult with and refer to the School Attendance Service.</p>

4.3	This will avoid a Penalty Notice being issued when the Attendance Service may already be instigating legal proceedings for unauthorised absence from school.
4.4	It has been agreed that the School Attendance Service, on behalf of Sutton Local Authority, will therefore issue Penalty Notices. The Service will administer the scheme from any funds obtained as a result of issuing Penalty Notices.
4.5	The Local Authority is required to set out the maximum number of Penalty Notices which may be issued to each parent in any 12-month period. For these purposes the Local Authority has set the maximum at two Penalty Notices for each parent for each individual child (with no restriction on the number of Warnings issued), although more than one Penalty Notice can be issued in a 12-month period in circumstances relating to multiple leave of absence (i.e., unauthorised holidays during term time).
	Should the issue of a Penalty Notice fail to improve attendance, consideration will be given to a prosecution. NB It is not a defence for the parent to say that she/he was unaware of the absences or the pupil being out unsupervised during an exclusion from school. Parents are expected to know where their children are on a daily basis and there is no duty, in law, on the school or the Local Authority to advise them of their child's absence.
5.	CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH A PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED
5.1	Penalty Notices apply to pupils of statutory school age, which finishes on the last Friday in June of Year 11. Within Sutton it has been agreed to use Penalty Notices in the following circumstances:
5.2	Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence from School London Borough of Sutton uses Penalty Notices to safeguard the education of children, and to influence the improvement of identified cases of poor attendance patterns at school. The School Attendance Service will consider the issue of Penalty Notices to parents. This will be where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there has been a Referral to School Attendance Service from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns; • evidence of intervention has been supplied by the pupil's school and / or the Local Authority; • the Local Authority is satisfied that an offence has been committed under Section 444 Education Act 1996; • where overall absence, within the previous six months, has fallen to 85% or below (15% or more absence); • at least 50% of that absence remaining unauthorised; • or, where there have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within the previous six weeks.

5.3	<p>Required Documentation for Each Child If a Penalty Notice is in relation to Unauthorised Absence:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fully completed Penalty Notice Referral form. • A Registration Certificate – to include previous 12 months. • A Certificate of Attendance. • A copy of the school’s Warning letter to the parents, warning that a referral may be made to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.
5.4	<p>Excluded pupils identified in a public place during specified days of exclusion: When a pupil is excluded from school, either for a fixed period exclusion or a permanent exclusion, the parent is responsible for ensuring that their child is not found in a public place during normal school hours on the specified days of the exclusion. Truancy Patrols take place regularly in Sutton, carried out by Attendance Officers in partnership with the Police.</p>
	<p>If an excluded pupil is stopped in a public place by the Truancy Patrol during the specified days of their exclusion, the School Attendance Officer on patrol can refer for a Penalty Notice to be issued under Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.</p> <p>Pupils on roll at a school outside Sutton will be referred to the attendance service in the Local Authority where they are on roll.</p>
5.5	<p>Holidays in term time without permission The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, amended in September 2013, removes references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the previous statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. It is at the Headteacher’s discretion to authorise such leave of absence.</p>
5.6	<p>It is for each school, with their Governing Body, to decide whether they wish to issue Penalty Notices for unauthorised leave of absence in term time. Where Penalty Notices will be issued, schools must ensure that all relevant literature is provided to parents, such as the school Prospectus, Attendance and Behaviour Policies, Home School Agreements, Newsletters; and website information includes the warning that parents may be issued with a Penalty Notice if leave of absence is taken without permission.</p>
5.7	<p>If a Headteacher does not authorise a request for leave of absence, s/he will send a letter to the parent confirming this decision, which includes a warning that a Penalty Notice may be issued.</p>
5.8	<p>If leave of absence is then taken without authorisation, school may choose to complete a Penalty Notice Referral. Penalty Notice Referrals must be agreed and signed by the Headteacher.</p> <p>Referral forms should be sent to the Penalty Notice Officer at the School Attendance Service, for receipt within 2 weeks of the holiday being completed. All Referrals will be considered for Penalty Notice issue.</p>
5.9	<p>Penalty Notices for any unauthorised leave of absence in term-time can be requested by the Headteacher. The Headteacher should act in accordance with the school’s Policy and must take</p>

	<p>Into account all considerations recommended in the National Guidance². The School Attendance Service Court Officer / Penalty Notice Officer may decline to issue a Notice where such considerations have not been made.</p> <p>The Local Authority will consider the following case disposals :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penalty Notice • Warning • Formal Caution • Court Proceedings • NFA
6.	ISSUING OF PENALTY NOTICES
6.1	<p>The issue of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence must be preceded by a formal letter to the parent. This letter will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise concerns regarding the level of unauthorised absence, and giving advice regarding contact with the school / School Attendance Officer. • Remind the parent of their responsibility for ensuring their child maintains full and regular attendance at school, in accordance with Section 444 of The Education Act 1996, and that failure to do so could result in legal action being taken. • Advise the parent of the powers of the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices. • State the specific absences which will give rise to the formal warning. • Notify the parent that continued unauthorised absence may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or other legal action.
6.2	It for Headteachers to determine if the request is Exceptional. Legislation requires that each request is judged on a case by case basis.
6.3	Before a Penalty Notice is issued it must be evident that the matter is capable of proof in the Magistrates' Court so that in the event of non-payment of the charge, the parent / carer can be prosecuted.
7.	NUMBER OF PENALTY NOTICES TO BE ISSUED FOR TRUANCY OR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE
7.1	<p>Sutton will issue no more than two penalty notices per pupil with high levels of unauthorised absences in a 12-month period.</p> <p>If the law continues to be broken around school attendance, the School Attendance Service legal intervention process will be considered.</p>

8.	PAYMENT OF PENALTY NOTICES
8.1	The penalty for each parent is £60 for each child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. (Service by post is deemed to have been effected, on the second working day after posting the Notice by first class post, unless the contrary is proved.)
8.2	All penalties are paid to the Local Authority to cover the administration costs of issuing and enforcing penalties and the prosecution of recipients who do not pay their penalty.
8.3	The arrangements for the paying of penalties will be detailed on the Penalty Notices.
8.4	If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period the School Attendance Service will consider prosecution for the offence to which the Notice applies. The prosecution is not for non-payment of the Notice but is a prosecution for irregular school attendance – Education Act 1996 Section 444.
8.5	There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.
8.6	A Penalty Notice need not be served before any prosecution can take place.
9.	WITHDRAWAL OF PENALTY NOTICES
9.1	A Penalty Notice can only be withdrawn in the following circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where it ought not to have been issued, i.e. where it has been issued outside the terms of the local Code of Conduct or where no offence has been committed; • where it has been issued to the wrong person; • where it contains factual errors; • where new evidence or information has come to light after the initial application, that warrants the withdrawal of the Penalty Notice.



Wallington High School *for Girls*

APPLICATION FOR STUDENT LEAVE

Please complete this form if you are requesting a leave of absence for your child from Wallington High School for Girls **at least two weeks in advance of leave**. Students are expected to attend school throughout the school year and a leave of absence will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher will consider any request for a period of absence using the following information:

1. The student's previous attendance history
2. The student's stage of education
3. The time of year
4. The nature and reason for the absence

Please allow 10 working days to receive a response regarding your request.

Please note if your child is out of school for a period of unauthorised absence, you may receive a fine from the Local Authority.

WHSG Student(s) Details

Full Name of Student(s)			
Tutor Group and Year			

Details of Absence Request

Start Date of Request		Date of Return to School	
Reason for Absence (Please provide as much detail as possible and include any relevant evidence e.g. medical certificate, letter from employers etc.)			

Parent/Carer details

Parent/Carer Full name			
Signature		Date signed	

For office use only

Date application received		No of days of absence being requested	
No of days absent this year		Date absences checked	
Application seen by (Please inset name)			
Attendance Officer		Headteacher/Director of Sixth Form	
Decision			
Decision reached (circle decision)	Authorised / Unauthorised / Partly Authorised		
Reason for decision and any additional details about partial authorisation			
Date decision reached		Date Parent/Carers informed	

Stage One Letter

Wallington High School *for Girls*

HEIRS OF THE PAST, MAKERS OF THE FUTURE

Headteacher: Mr R V Booth BSc
Woodcote Road, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 0PH
Telephone 020 8647 2380
Facsimile 020 8647 2270
info@wallingtongirls.org.uk
www.wallingtongirls.org.uk

Parent's Name
Address

Date

RE: Stage One Attendance Letter

Dear [Parent's/ Carer's Name],

[Student Name]

I am writing to inform you of my concerns about [student name]'s attendance. Having analysed the attendance figures from [date to date], I have found that your child has an attendance rate of [%]. This is clearly below our target of at least 97% for each student. It is our legal duty to inform parents of students whose attendance is below our expectations even when we have been made aware of the reasons for these absences. Attendance below 90% is categorised as persistent absenteeism and is a concern, therefore, parents/carers are requested to attend a meeting at school with the Head of Year on [insert date and time] to discuss this further.

The following information outlines how important good attendance to school is:

Above 97% - this equals less than 6 days of absence a year, 30 lessons missed
Excellent attendance. These young people will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Students will also form positive habits for attendance which will help in the future.
96% - this equals 7 days of absence a year, 35 lessons missed
These students are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Students who take a 2 week leave of absence every year can only achieve a maximum of 95% attendance, and will miss 40 lessons.
90% - this equals 19 days of absence a year, 95 lessons missed
Young people in this group are missing a month of school per year. The Government classes young people in this group as "Persistent Absentees", and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of young people in this group could be passed to the Education Welfare Officer with the possibility of legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

Should there be no improvement to [student's name] attendance we may have to involve the Attendance Service at Cognus who works with families needing support in getting their children to school or who may impose a penalty notice. Only by working together can we ensure that [student's name] attendance improves and they therefore achieve success at school.

Yours sincerely

Stage Two Letter

Wallington High School *for Girls*

HEIRS OF THE PAST, MAKERS OF THE FUTURE

Headteacher: Mr R V Booth BSc
Woodcote Road, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 0PH
Telephone 020 8647 2380
Facsimile 020 8647 2270
info@wallingtongirls.org.uk
www.wallingtongirls.org.uk

Parent's Name
Address

Date

RE: Stage Two Attendance Letter

Dear [Parent's/ Carer's Name],

[Student Name]

Following on from my previous letter, I am writing to inform you of my concerns about [student name]'s attendance. Having analysed the attendance figures from [date to date], I have found that your child has an attendance rate of [%]. This is clearly below our target of at least 97% for each student and is not the improvement we had hoped to see.

It is our legal duty to inform parents of students whose attendance is below our expectations even when we have been made aware of the reasons for these absences. Attendance below 90% is categorised as persistent absenteeism and is a concern, therefore, parents/carers are requested to attend a meeting at school on [insert date and time] with the Education Welfare Officer, Head of Year and Assistant Headteacher to discuss this further.

If absence intensifies the school will seek to work with external organisations and the Local Authority to help to remove barriers to school attendance. If this support has not been effective or has not been engaged with the school will work with the Attendance Service at Cognus to put formal support in place in the form of a Stage Three Letter, parenting contract or education supervision order and/or the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Only by working together can we ensure that [student's name] attendance improves and they therefore achieve success at school.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Booth
Headteacher

Stage Three Letter – Penalty Notice



Wallington High School *for Girls*

HEIRS OF THE PAST, MAKERS OF THE FUTURE

Headteacher: Mr R V Booth BSc
Woodcote Road, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 0PH
Telephone 020 8647 2380
Facsimile 020 8647 2270
info@wallingtongirls.org.uk
www.wallingtongirls.org.uk

Parent's Name
Address

Date

RE: Stage Three Attendance Letter – Penalty Notice

Dear [Parent's/ Carer's Name],

[Student Name]

I am writing to inform you that a referral has been made to the Attendance Service at Cognus to initiate the issuing of a Penalty Fine. The reason for the referral is: Un-authorized leave of absence.

Having analysed the attendance figures from [date to date], I have found that your child has an attendance rate of [%]. This is clearly below our target of at least 97% for each student and is not the improvement we had hoped to see.

The school has a clear policy regarding attendance and leave of absence. The policies are in place to ensure students achieve their full potential as there is a clear link between poor attendance and underachievement. In this case, it is felt the policy has not been followed and therefore the referral has been made.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Booth
Headteacher

Appendix 4

DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance' (2022) -
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

Appendix 5

DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2023) -

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1161275/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023_part_one.pdf

