



WALLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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REVIEW

Last Reviewed:

January 2019

To be reviewed:

January 2021 or as legislation changes

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 school 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.

Good attendance and punctuality at school is vital for students in order 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 96% attendance each year. An attendance record of 90% is equal to 1 day missed per fortnight and is classed as persistent absence by the Department for Education (DfE). If this continues from Years 7 to 11, a total of six month's 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.

2. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Schools

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:

- individual rewards for students with excellent attendance records;
- school targets are set for attendance and individual targets are set where necessary;
- Attendance information is sent to parents/carers regularly to assist them in monitoring their daughter'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;
- a Key Stage 3/4 and a Key Stage 5 Data and Attendance Assistant dedicated to the administration of attendance including the follow-up of absence and lateness (Appendix 1);
- contact with parents/carers on the first day of absence;
- a working partnership with the Borough 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 track their attendance via the attendance tracking page in their planner. 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 by telephone or e-mail to attendance@wallingtongirls.org.uk on the first morning of any absence as per the DfE 'School Attendance: Guidance for schools' September 2018. The DfE classes attendance of 90% or below as 'persistent absence' (PA) and, as such, collects data on such students nationally.

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 daughter(s). Below is a list of suggested strategies:

- encourage full attendance;
- stress the importance of full attendance to your daughter;
- do not allow your daughter 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 daughter'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 daughter is punctual for school;

- inform the school of any absence;
- take any family holidays in school holidays, not during term time;
- if your daughter 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. WHAT IS THE SCHOOL'S POSITION ON GRANTING LEAVE FOR FAMILY HOLIDAYS?

Legislation states that any application for holiday (this is now called leave of absence) must be in exceptional circumstances only and must be approved by the Headteacher in good time in advance of the leave being taken. Parents do not have a right to take their child out of school during term time. By law you must ask permission for your child to miss school. If you do not, you risk being served with a penalty notice from the local authority (Appendix 2). The Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

How do I make a request for leave of absence (*holiday in school term time*)?

1. You need to write to the Headteacher at least four weeks before the start of the requested absence giving the reason for the request. Evidence of the request should be provided as applicable.
2. The school will then write to you within seven school working days to confirm / decline the request.

What will happen if my request is refused but I still take the leave of absence?

We will notify the Borough Schools' Attendance Service (BSAS) who may issue a penalty notice to you. Alternatively the Headteacher or someone authorised by them can issue the notice.

A penalty notice of £60 could be imposed per student and per parent/carer. If this is not paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice the cost rises to £120, which must be paid between 21 and 28 days of receipt of the notice. All penalty notices will be delivered by hand or first class post.

If the notice has not been paid in full by 28 days of receipt, the council must either prosecute for the offence or withdraw the notice. Once issued a penalty notice may only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- proof has been established that the penalty notice has been issued to the wrong person;
- the notice ought not to have been issued e.g. where it has been issued outside the terms of the code of conduct or no offence has been committed. This prosecution is for the offence of failing to secure attendance at school not for non-payment of the fine.

Prosecutions are brought under S440 of the Education Act 1996.

Parents / carers need to be mindful that a conviction for this offence can result in a criminal record.

4. STUDENTS WITH MEDICAL NEEDS

Legislation states that a child who has health needs should have the same opportunities as their peer group, including a broad and balanced curriculum. As far as possible, we will ensure that students with health needs, and who are unable to attend school, receive the same range and quality of education as they would experience at school.

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 December 2015, is followed for all students with medical needs.

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

5. STUDENTS MISSING EDUCATION FOR REASONS OTHER THAN MEDICAL NEEDS

Missing education can be an indicator of other circumstances including students being at risk of harm or neglect so the school must investigate all unexplained absences.

Attendance is monitored through the daily registers. Monitoring of attendance occurs on a daily basis and is carried out by the Key Stage 3/4 and Key Stage 5 Data and Attendance Assistants. 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 BSAS.

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 daughter.

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

If no explanation of unauthorised absence for an extended period occurs we will consult with the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).

Children Missing Education

'Children missing education' are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils 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 (Appendix 3).

6. WHAT IS AN UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE?

Only the school can authorise an absence. An explanation given by a parent is not necessarily sufficient for the school to authorise an absence.

According to guidelines to schools from the Department for Education (DfE), an absence may only be authorised if the absence is due to:

- student illness;
- "Leave" given by the school (this commonly includes medical appointments, interviews, approved educational opportunities and other similar special circumstances);
- the student being unable to attend due to unavoidable causes;
- religious observance where formal evidence has been provided

Any other absences cannot be authorised.

7. DOES IT MATTER IF MY DAUGHTER HAS RECORDED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES?

It is the law for parents to ensure that their daughter has the benefit of regular education. Recorded unauthorised absences show that parents are in breach of this law. Schools and local authorities have the power to serve parents with a Fixed Penalty Notice if a student has unauthorised absences in a school term, terms or year.

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 authority.

8. WHAT CAN I DO IF MY CHILD IS STARTING TO PRESENT ATTENDANCE DIFFICULTIES?

These difficulties can show themselves in a number of different ways e.g. a reluctance to go to school, feigning illness, failure to attend school even though your daughter is sent, missing lessons whilst in school. If a problem seems to be emerging parents/carers should:

- talk to your daughter 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 BSAS;
- seek advice from appropriate websites.

9. PENALTY NOTICES – ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Please see the attached leaflet in Appendix 2 for information on Penalty Notices.

10. WEBSITES WHICH MAY BE USEFUL TO PARENTS:

- Family Lives (formerly Parentline) – www.familylives.org.uk
- Advisory Centre for Education - www.ace-ed.org.uk
- Parents Centre - www.parentscentre.gov.co.uk

11. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/638267/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf

Children Missing Education

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

School Attendance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/739764/Guidance_on_school_attendance_Sept_2018.pdf

12. OTHER RELEVANT SCHOOL POLICIES

Supporting Student with Medical Needs policy

13. Appendices

1. WHSG Attendance System
2. London Borough of Sutton Penalty Notice leaflet
3. London Borough of Sutton Policy and Guidance for Children Missing Education

ATTENDANCE SYSTEM – KEY STAGES 3 AND 4 (OCTOBER 2015)

1. Heads of Year (HOYs) to pass a list of students who should not be rung if they appear on the daily absence list to the Data and Attendance Assistant. It is the responsibility of HOYs to keep this updated.

2. Daily

- Data and Attendance Assistant prints out daily fire list and places KS3 and 4 in the fire box in the reception office.
- Data and Attendance Assistant monitors missing registers, enters paper registers, checks absence line, medical book, absence notes, absence texts and any visit registers as needed.
- Receptionist enters late book entries.
- Once information is gathered, Schoolcomms will send an attendance text to parents/carers by 11am. Information gathered from phone calls is then entered onto the SIMS system, if appropriate.
- Tutors take the register in morning registration.
- Subject teachers take the register each lesson.
- Students place absence notes in the box outside the Pastoral Office. They should keep the attendance tracking section of their planner up-to-date.

3. Half termly

- Tutor Team – An attendance report is given to tutors at the half-termly tutor team meeting by the HOY (this is produced by the Data and Attendance Assistant). Tutors are expected to ask for missing attendance letters and discuss attendance with the tutor group.
- Heads of Year (HOYs) – Each half term they produce a report on the attendance of their Year Group based on data provided by the Data and Attendance Assistant. In the report the HOYs write an analysis of findings and outline interventions already made with students. They identify students who need interventions and any Persistent Absentees (PA's).
- HOY meets with the Borough School's Attendance Service (BSAS) to discuss attendance issues.
- Follow-up involves a three tier system instigated by tutors and followed by BSAS referral:

1. First issue of concern = letter home;
2. Second issue of concern = call home by HOY;
3. Third issue of concern = Meeting with HOY;
4. Continued concern = Meeting with HOY and BSAS.

This may result in referral to BSAS if attendance is still a concern following these four steps.

- 100% per cent attendance letters are sent out termly. Year 7 and 8 students also receive a 'presents for presence' award in celebration assemblies.
- The Data and Attendance Assistant sends out unexplained absence emails to parents.

4. Termly

- Headteacher's Behaviour and Safety report to Governors completed by AHT (Assistant Headteacher) Student Support.

5. Annually

- 100% Attendance awards are given out at the 'Well Done Wallington' events.

Unauthorised Absence From School

Education Act 1996
Education and Inspection Act 2006

Penalty Notices Advice for Parents and Carers



London Borough of Sutton

Borough School Attendance Service

The Grove, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 3AL

020 8770 6605

Revised September 2013

Why have Penalty Notices been introduced?

Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally. Missing school lowers a pupil's achievement levels and disrupts school routines, and the learning of others. It can also cause a pupil to be vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer-term life opportunities.

The Borough School Attendance Service is authorised to issue Penalty Notices, on referral from schools for unauthorised

absence, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1996, and the Education and Inspection Act 2006.

What is a Penalty Notice?

Under existing legislation, parents and carers commit an offence if their child fails to attend school regularly, and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot, or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court, but which seeks to secure improvement in a pupil's attendance. Full payment of the Penalty Notice discharges parents and carers of any further liability for the period stated on the Notice.

What are the costs?

The fine is £60 if paid within 21 days of issue of the Penalty Notice, increasing to £120 if paid after this date, but within 28 days of issue. (An invoice served by first class post is deemed to have been received on the second working day after posting.)

How are they issued?

Penalty Notices will always be issued by first class post.

Who are they issued to?

A Penalty Notice is issued to **each** parent in respect of **each** child not attending school. "Parents" in Education law relates to a parent or carer of the child(ren).

When are they issued?

The London Borough of Sutton considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be issued in a range of situations, such as:

- Your child has unauthorised absences from school
- Your child is persistently late at school after the registers have closed
- Taking unauthorised holidays in term time
- Unauthorised absence from alternative education provision

The Local Authority never takes such action lightly and would rather pro-actively work with, and support parents and carers to improve Attendance, without having to resort to any enforcement action.

However, the Local Authority will use these powers if this is considered the only way of securing a child's regular attendance at school.

Is a warning given?

The usual response to a first offence will be a written warning in a letter from the Borough School Attendance Service. This warning remains in effect for one year.

However, in exceptional circumstances, the Local Authority has the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice without a warning, for example where a parent has chosen to take their child on holiday during term time, without prior authorisation from the school.

Can I appeal against the Penalty Notice?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a Penalty Notice has been issued.

How do I pay?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. You need to be aware that payment in part, or by instalment, is not an option with Penalty Notices. They must be paid in full.

What happens if I don't pay?

You have up to 28 days from issue of the Notice to pay the fine in full. After this time, if the Notice remains unpaid, the Local Authority is required, in accordance with the Act, to commence proceedings in the Magistrates court for the original offence of failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.

If found guilty, parents / carers can be fined up to £1000 each parent, per case.

The Magistrates Court is also able to impose other sanctions such as Parenting Orders.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice: payment discharges your liability in this respect. However, it may be that a prosecution is considered for further periods of unauthorised absence, not covered in the Penalty Notice. In this instance, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school and support agencies such as the Borough School Attendance Service.

Can I get help if my child is not attending school regularly?

Yes. The Local Authority and your child's school will give you advice and support if you need help to improve your child's school attendance, although you should be aware that this is ultimately the legal responsibility of the parent or carer.

***It is very important that you speak with the school,
or with the Borough School Attendance Service,
at the earliest opportunity
if you have any worries at all about ensuring
the regular and punctual attendance of your child at school.***

Children Missing Education referral pathways for Sutton Schools - 24.4.17



