



Western Road Community Primary School

Attendance Policy

This policy was adopted in December 2025
This policy is due for review in December 2026

Introduction

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Western Road Community Primary School by:

- Encouraging staff, parents/carers and children to maximise the learning experience so that all children reach their full potential.
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents/carers relating to school attendance.

Rationale

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

- Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable causes.
- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:
 - Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
 - Truancy before or during the school day
 - Absences which have never been properly explained

- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. It is very important that all parents and carers understand that children with unauthorised absences, including holidays, unexplained absences and persistent lateness are at risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice from East Sussex County Council.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences.

Reporting an absence

Parents/carers are requested to report the reason for a child's absence by telephoning or emailing the school office **before 8.45am**.

If a child has not arrived at school by 9.30am the school administrator will contact the parent/carer. Should contact not be made with the parent/carer by 10am the school administrator will endeavor to contact the emergency telephone numbers on the child's record card.

Parents/carers should ensure the school is kept informed of any changes to their addresses and telephone number via Arbor.

Lateness

Children arriving late after the gates close (8.50am – 9.00) will be marked with an L code (late before the register closes. Children who arrive after 9.00 (when the registers close) will be marked with a U code (unauthorised absence). All children who arrive after the gates close (8.50am) must report to the School Office and sign in on the Late Register, with a reason given for the absence.

Late arrival both disrupts the learning of other children and means that the child concerned is not settled at the start of the lesson and will miss valuable learning.

Monitoring of School Attendance

- Attendance will be reviewed every half term by the Headteacher/School Office.
 - a) For overall attendance at 100%
 - b) For overall attendance between 95% - 99%
 - c) For overall attendance between 90% - 94.9%
 - d) For overall attendance 90% and below

The school will celebrate good attendance and a reward system will be in place, as determined by the Senior Leadership Team.

Any unexplained absence or lateness will be followed up by the School Office.

Letters for poor attendance and/or persistent lateness will be sent out as and when appropriate throughout the school year. The Headteacher and/or Deputy Headteacher will contact and liaise with parents/carers throughout the year to offer support and guidance to improve any concerning attendance with priority given to vulnerable children.

We may, considering the circumstances of individual families, do home visits to see the child and family. Home visits may be arranged or unannounced depending upon the individual circumstances and if we consider there to be a safeguarding issue. Home visits will only be undertaken by a member of SLT, accompanied by another member of staff.

Attendance information is reported to and considered by the Full Governing Body at every meeting.

Requests for removal from learning

Parents/carers requesting removal from learning for either unavoidable or exceptional reasons should complete an absence request form available from the school office or information stand. The form should be completed and returned to school at least 10 days before the requested absence date.

The outcome of this request will be notified to parents/carers within 5 days of application.

The school will follow ESCC's Penalty Notice Procedure for Schools (August 2024). This may result in a request from the school to East Sussex to issue penalties to parents/carers for periods of unauthorised absence.

Exceptional or unavoidable circumstances do not include:

- the availability of cheap holidays;
- an absence of holiday paid for, or booked, by someone else;
- an overlap with beginning/end of term;
- a mix-up in term dates;
- birthdays, relatives visiting, trips to festivals (this list is not exhaustive).

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

- 96% attendance for all children

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.