





Weare Academy Church of England First School

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE A GUIDE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

ATTENDANCE  Wessex Learning Trust
Every day counts! We Learn Together!

| | |
|---|--|
| Below 90% Serious Concern. Persistent absence. |  |
| 90 - 95.9% Concern. Low attendance. | |
| At least 96% Expected attendance. | |

Expected attendance means having no more than seven days off this school year!

School Attendance

Weare Academy First School and The Wessex Learning Trust believe that all its learners should enjoy school, experience success, and realise their full potential. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning.

Parents/carers are legally responsible for making sure that their child gets a full-time education. Once your child starts school, they must attend every day that the school is open.

Schools must take an attendance register twice a day, which is a legal document. Any absences will be recorded with a specific code depending on the type of absence.

The Wessex Learning Trust Attendance Policy is available on our website www.weareacademy.co.uk (or click on the link [WLT Attendance Policy](#)).

Absences

Absences fall into two categories authorised and unauthorised:-

Authorised Absence

These include:-

- your child is too ill to attend school
- you have been given permission by the Headteacher, in advance, for your child to be absent on a specific day due to exceptional circumstances
- your child is participating in a religious event (as defined by the Department for Education)

Unauthorised Absence

These include:-

- long weekends and holidays in term time
- days off for personal trips
- not wanting to attend school
- shopping days or days off for birthdays
- parental/carer or sibling illness
- late arrival (more than 30 minutes after the school day has started).

Non-Contact by Care Giver to School

If a parent/carer giver fails to call the School on the first day of their child's absence, the school will make every reasonable attempt to contact the care giver, if we are unable to make contact on any of the emergency numbers provided and there is concern for the welfare of the child, we may request a Welfare Check from the police.

Illness

If your child is too unwell to attend school, you are required to telephone the School Office on the first day of absence before 9.15 am with an explanation of their illness. If a child is absent for more than one day, the care giver should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

For guidance on whether your child is too ill for school please visit NHS <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Medical Appointments

Where possible, please make medical, dental, optical, and other appointments outside of school time.

If your child has an appointment in school time, they will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment (for example, if you have an appointment at 12 noon, your child can attend school before the appointment and for the afternoon session).

The school will request the parent/carer to provide medical evidence such as an appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

Late

If your child arrives at school after 9 am you will need to take them straight to the School Office and sign them in.

If a child arrives at school after 9 am but before 9.30 am, they will be marked as 'Late (before the Register has closed)'.

If a child arrives after 9.30 am they will be marked as 'Late (after Registers closed)', this will be recorded as an 'unauthorised late mark', which is the same as an 'unauthorised absence' and will affect your child's record of attendance.

Being late to school can have a considerable impact, the table below shows just how much time can be missed over a year.

| Minutes late every day | Days lost in a year |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 5 | 3 days |
| 10 | 6.5 days |
| 15 | 10 days |
| 20 | 13 days |

If your child is late for school they are missing out on their education as lessons commence straight after registration, this will hinder your child's progress and also disturb the learning of others.

Does having days off school matter?

Being in school is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development.

The table below indicates how absence has a significant effect on missing lessons.

| Attendance during school year | Days lost in a year | Which is approximately | Approximate number of lessons missed |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 95% | 9.5 days | 2 weeks | 50 lessons |
| 90% | 19 days | 4 weeks | 100 lessons |
| 85% | 28 days | 6 weeks | 150 lessons |
| 80% | 38 days | 8 weeks | 200 lessons |

What is good attendance?

Attendance over 96% is considered to be good. If attendance drops to 90% or lower the Government classify the child as a 'Persistent Absence' and their attendance is addressed as a matter of concern.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a learner, we will make the care giver aware of the issues regarding their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address these. However, if care givers do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions.

What will happen if my child does not attend school regularly?

The School and Local Authority have a responsibility to ensure attendance of children in school, where attendance is failing to improve the School will offer support and advice, referrals may also be made to other agencies. You will be asked to provide evidence that your child cannot attend school which may include asking for medical evidence of illness.

If you fail to ensure your child attends school regularly, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to consider legal action to enforce school attendance under the Education Act 1996 Section 444(1).

The Educational Safeguarding Service Issues Penalty Notices on behalf of the Local Authority in line with the Somerset Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, details of which can be found on <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/school-life/school-attendance-and-children-missing-education/>

Unauthorised absence is likely to result in the Local Authority issuing each parent/carer with the following action:-

Receiving a Penalty Notice Warning - where you will be given 30 sessions (15 school days) to improve your child's attendance.

Receiving a Penalty Notice - This is a fine of £120 per parent/carer per child for periods of unauthorised absence.

If Penalty Notices are issued and not paid the Local Authority will consider prosecuting parents, this can result in a fine of up to £1000 for each offence

What will happen if I take my child on holiday in term time and the school has not agreed the absence?

Children have 13 week's annual holiday from school and holiday dates are published in advance on our website. Parents/carers are expected to take family holidays during this time so as not to disrupt their child's education.

Parents/carers do not have an entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time, only in exceptional circumstances may a Headteacher alongside the Wessex Learning Trust grant an authorised leave of absence and how many days to approve. Applications for term-time leave must be made in advance and in writing.

Unauthorised absences resulting from term-time leave being taken is likely to result in the Local Authority issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice for each child absent from school.

What should I do if my child is reluctant to go to school?

Your child has a right to an education and to be safe and happy at school. If your child is anxious or worried about going to school, for any reason, please speak to the School in the first instance.

For guidance on Emotionally Based School Avoidance please visit Support Services for Education <https://www.supportservicesforeducation.co.uk/Page/19956>

What can you do as a parent/carer?

- Ensure your child has had enough sleep
- Create good routines for mornings at home so everyone's mornings can start calmly
- Ensure your child has the right uniform, equipment, PE kit and has had breakfast to get them off to the best start for the day
- Arrive at school on time
- If your child is not able to attend school that day, telephone the school first thing in the morning to explain why they are unable to attend
- Talk to your child about their school day and support with the completion of homework.
- Read all communication from the school
- Do not take your child on holiday, shopping, day trips, birthday treats or family occasions in term time

At Weare Academy First School we want our learners to attend school every day unless they are really not well enough. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our learners to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident, and competent adults who can realise their full potential.