West Bridgford Infant School and West Bridgford Junior School

Attendance Policy

September 2026

Adopted: September 2026
Review Date: September 2027

Attendance Policy

1. Introduction and background

At West Bridgford Infant School and West Bridgford Junior School we strive for excellence in education by providing a safe, secure, caring environment, where all are valued and respected as individuals, enabling them to reach their full potential. We recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.
Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At our schools we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

If pupils are unable to attend school for whatever reason, we expect parents to let us know this before 9.00am at the latest by leaving a message on the answerphone, via a phone call or email to the school office. If a child does not arrive at school, we will endeavour to make contact with parents via phone call to ensure the child is safe.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. If there are any concerns with attendance or punctuality, school staff will work alongside the parents, providing support and guidance, in order to address any barriers or issues.

2. Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our school information booklet, website and newsletters
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance within the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Celebrate good attendance by celebrating class achievements;

3. Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a

parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence.

4. Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence. Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, medical or dental appointments; (with evidence of appointment cards)
- Days of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- 'Exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis)
- Exclusion

5. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable. Absence should **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, I'm not well, I couldn't get him/her to school, Gran's not well, he/she had a late night, couldn't get him/her up in time etc)
- Family holidays

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We may use outside agencies to help with this.

6. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, whether this is authorised or unauthorised. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately. PA pupils are monitored and we combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

If the unauthorised absence is in excess of 5 days (10 sessions) over a 10-week rolling period then the school will consider whether to ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice. A Penalty Notice would be issued to each parent for each child to whom persistent absence applies. See the Penalty Notice section for more information.

7. Registers and Lateness

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session.
At the **Infant School**, our school day starts at **9.00am**. Any child arriving after 9.00am is marked as late. Children arriving after 9.15am are marked as an unauthorised absence.

At the **Junior School**, our school day starts at **8.45am**. Any child arriving after 8.45am is marked as late. Children arriving after 9.00am are marked as an unauthorised absence.

All late arrivals must enter via the front door and report to the school office.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and vital information to prepare them for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill, which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children.

In considering attendance levels, the class register is of paramount importance. Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education Regulations 2006.

8. Absence Procedures

If a child is absent, parents/carers must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.00am, if at all possible. The school has an answer phone so that parents can phone before school starts. Alternatively, parents can email the school.

  Infant School email: admin@westbridgford-inf.notts.sch.uk
  Junior School email: admin@westbridgford-jun.notts.sch.uk
- Call into school and report the absence to the reception staff

As vigilant and caring schools, we apply first-day response to pupil absence. This means making a determined and sustained effort to identify the reason on the first morning of absence. If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9.20am; we will do our best to do this before 9.30am
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the class teacher or member of SLT if absences persist

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. It will always be attempted to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's

attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Local Authority can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions (see below).

9. Leave of Absence

Since 2013 there has been **no** entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Headteachers have the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances. If a headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is highly unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

There is **no entitlement in law** for any leave of absence from school in term time. Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the relevant forms, which are available from the school website or the school office. Any request for leave of absence can only be authorised where school accepts there are 'exceptional circumstances.

10. Absence for Religious Reasons

The school will authorise up to two days of absence per religious festival and up to a maximum of 4 days in any one academic year. This will be marked as 'R' in the register. If parents/carers require an additional day this must be requested in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

11. Penalty Notices

The law gives powers to the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child attends school. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels and disrupts school routines and the learning of others. Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.

First Offence	The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance, the amount will be: **£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.**
Second Offence (within 3 years)	The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance, the amount will be: **£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. No reduced rate will be offered.**
Third Offence (within 3 years)	The third time an offence is committed for term time leave or irregular attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent per child.

A child who has a record of attendance **below 95%** for the current or previous academic year**,** is more likely to have an application for leave of absence refused and more likely to receive a Penalty Notice if the amount of unauthorised absences exceeds the criteria in the paragraph above.

12. People responsible for this policy and its implementation

It is the responsibility of the Senior Attendance Champion to monitor attendance and punctuality regularly. For the Infant School this is Gayle Cutts and for the Junior School it is Catherine Bancroft. They can be contacted through the school office.

The Governing Body are kept informed on attendance figures termly through the Head Teachers report.

Adopted: September 2026

Date of next review: Annually

A Graduated Response to Concerning Absence at West Bridgford Infant School and West Bridgford Junior School.

EXPECTATIONS

We aspire to high expectations of attendance from all pupils and parents. We build a culture where all children can and want to be in school and ready to learn by prioritizing attendance improvement across the school. We will ensure that our Attendance Policy is shared with parents and that expectations are clearly communicated.

MONITORING

Our Attendance Champions rigorously use attendance data to identify concerns regarding poor attendance (on an individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so that school and parents can work together to resolve any barriers to attendance. A conversation may be initiated by the child's class teacher.

INITIAL SUPPORT

When a pattern is identified, we will contact parents so that we can understand the barriers to attendance and agree how we can all work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

If there are further concerns, following the initial contact we will look at other lines of support that may be necessary to remove the barriers to good attendance. This might include Early Help where absence is a symptom of wide issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or being engaged with, a referral may be made for Education Enforcement to protect the pupil's right to an education.