



WALLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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REVIEW

Last Reviewed:

January 2020

To be reviewed:

January 2023 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 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. For example, 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 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.

2. RIGHTS 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:

- 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;
- An Attendance Officer 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 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 classifies 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. REGISTRATION

- Registers will be taken punctually each day at 8.25am and 1.50pm
- If a student in Yrs 7-11 arrives after the registers close at 8.25 am, they should report to reception to sign in and register. The signing in book should be filled in with the reason for their lateness
- The receptionist will mark the student late on the register and record the reason for lateness
- If a student registers after 9.30am 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
- Registers will also be taken in the first ten minutes of every lesson

4. PUNCTUALITY

Good punctuality to both lessons and to school is expected of all students.

We know that employers set great store by punctuality and attendance and it is important for our students to understand the importance 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 punctuality problems.

Below is the process the school employs to monitor students and their punctuality and how we sanction students who are late

Year 7 to 11

Stage 1

Every day a student is late and arrives after 8.25 they must present to reception, sign in and she will have their planner stamped.

- Parents will receive a School Comms message informing them that their child has been late to school.
- If a student is late two times in a term the form tutor will speak with the student and the KS3 Administrator will email home.
- If a student is late three times in a term she will receive a 30 minute detention on a Friday after school 3-3.30pm.
- If a student is subsequently late they will again receive another detention.

A letter will be sent home to inform parents that a detention has been set.

Stage 2

- If a student is late more than eight times in a term- a meeting will take place between the student, the form tutor and the Head of Year. This will outline that the student is to be placed on Blue report for Punctuality for a period of 2 weeks. After this time the report will be reviewed. If progress has been made the student will be taken off report.
- If the student is late whilst on Blue report they will receive an immediate one hour detention as a sanction. A letter will be sent to parents informing them of this.
- Whilst the student is on Blue report they should report to a Head of Year in the Pastoral office to get their report signed at every break time. Failure to do so could result in being elevated to Stage 3.

A letter will be sent to parents informing them that their daughter has been placed on Blue report and outlining the number of times they have been late.

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 elevated to Stage 3.

Stage 3

If a student is late twelve times in a term and continues to be late to school; then a formal meeting takes place between the student, Head of Year and the parents/ carers to discuss resolving the issue of persistent lateness to school / lessons. A Pastoral Support Plan is agreed and shared with relevant parties.

Stage 4

If there is no improvement in the number of lates to school / lessons a Headteacher's detention will be set (which takes place on a Saturday).

The student is placed on RED report to the Assistant Headteacher in charge of Attendance.

Sixth Form

Stage 1

Every day your daughter is late and arrives after 8.25 she must use her electronic entry card to tap in on the E block reader (Year 12s who have not yet been issued with their card must present to Reception and sign in there).

- If a student is late two times **in a week** the student will receive a 20 minute detention on a Friday after-school the following week.
- If a student is late three times **in a week** the student will receive a 40 minute detention on a Friday after-school the following week.
- If a student is late more than three times **in a week** the student will receive a 60 minute detention on a Friday after-school the following week.
- The Sixth Form Administrator will email parents to inform them that a detention has been set

Stage 2

- If a student is late more than eight times in a half term a Director of Sixth Form detention will be set for a Friday (this may be in addition to any detentions already served). Part of this detention will consist of a meeting between the Director of Sixth Form and student to discuss their repeated lateness and the student's home study and lunchtime privileges will be removed for a period of 2 weeks.
- An email will be sent to parents informing them that their daughter has been identified as having issues with repeated lateness and the removal of their privileges.
- If there are no further incidents of lateness in those 2 weeks the student has their electronic entry card returned and privileges reinstated, for a 'probationary' period of a further two weeks where punctuality will be closely monitored by the Head of Year and Form Tutor.
- If the student is late whilst at Stage 2 they may be elevated to Stage 3.

Stage 3

If a student is late **twelve times** a term and continues to be late to school, then a formal meeting takes place between the student, Head of Year and the parents/ carers to discuss resolving the issue of persistent lateness to school. A Pastoral Support Plan is agreed and shared with relevant parties, taking into account any extenuating circumstances. This will include the removal of lunchtime and home study privileges for a period of time, until an improvement is seen in punctuality and the Support Plan is reviewed.

Stage 4

If there is no improvement in the number of lates to school the student will be placed onto the Sixth Form Disciplinary System, usually at a Stage 2 (written warning) level. This can then be escalated through the system if appropriate.

The Heads of Year will liaise with the Senior Attendance Officer for the borough at any stage regarding further actions that may need to take place.

Students start each new term afresh. However, 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 elevate 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 your daughter's punctuality record.

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

5. AUTHORISED ABSENCE

The Attendance Officer (Years 7 to 11) or Sixth Form Administrator (Sixth Form) must be informed on the first day of absence before 9.30 am by an e-mail from the parent/carer (sent from the same e-mail address currently notified to us on our administrative systems) to the following address - attendance@wallingtongirls.org.uk , and **every subsequent day** before 9.30 am if the absence continues.

- The attendance officer (Sixth Form Administrator) will inform parents/carers of their child's absence if the school has not received any notification
- If, after a period of seven school days since a student has returned, there has been no communication from parents/carers despite a written, e-mail or 'phone request from the School's Attendance Officer to explain the absence(s), this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence
- Punctuality and attendance is reported on School reports
- Medical appointments – please see section 7

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 minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment)
- Religious observance
- Close family bereavement
- Leave of absence authorised by the school
- Exclusion

Other absence that may be authorised

The school may authorise other absence providing the Attendance Officer is notified by 12 noon on the first day of the absence. These absences include:

- Emergency situation of a family member e.g. sudden illness
- Transport problems where these are not known in advance

The Attendance Officer should record the reason for absence in the register.

In all cases, the School will decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised

Sixth Form

For 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.

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.

6. Requests for Leave of Absence

Requests for leave of absence are not generally granted and almost never to those whose attendance is below 97%. Requests for leave of absence require approval in advance and should be submitted at least 10 days before the planned absence. The student or parent should obtain an Absence Request Form from the Attendance Officer or from the school website. When the completed form is returned, the Headteacher, in consultation with the Attendance Officer, will decide whether to authorise or not, and send the appropriate letter.

The School disapproves strongly of term time absences for reasons other than illness except in specific circumstances. DFE guidelines are quite clear.

Discretionary authorised absence may be granted for family reasons such as attendance at a funeral, for approved educational activities and for an exceptional experience, for example performing in a West End Musical.

Authorised absence will only be granted where proper procedures have been followed and the permission given. Leave of absence will not be granted retrospectively.

Where the School and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the student is then absent from school the absence must be marked as unauthorised and notified to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Where parents keep a student away for longer than agreed then the extra time should also be marked as unauthorised.

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. The Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

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 could be imposed per student and per parent/carer and if unpaid 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.

7. 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.

What to do if your child has to leave school for a medical appointment.

If your child has to leave school for an appointment during the school day please send email to the school at **least 24 hours in advance (except if it is an emergency appointment then send it on the day) addressed to attendance@wallingtongirls.org.uk:-**

To ensure the safeguarding of all our students we are unable to let a student leave school without parent/carer consent in year 7 -11.

We would ask that you advise us in your email whether your child is being **collected by a parent/carer**. If you are not collecting your child, **please give your permission for them to leave school on their own in the email.**

8. 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 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 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).

9. 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.

10. 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

OTHER RELEVANT SCHOOL POLICIES

Supporting Student with Medical Needs policy
Behaviour policy
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

ATTENDANCE SYSTEM – KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

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

- Attendance Officer (Years 7-11) prints out daily fire list and places KS3 and 4 in the fire box in the reception office.
- Attendance Officer (Years 7-11) 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.
- 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 Attendance Officer (Years 7-11) 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 Attendance Officer 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 certificates are issued to students termly during Celebration assemblies by their Head of Year.
- The Attendance Officer (Years 7-11) 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



APPLICATION FOR STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR
DISCRETIONARY FAMILY REASONS

Appendix 2

Full name of student	Tutor Group
_____	_____
Address	

Reason for application and dates	

Signature of parent(s)/carer(s)	I/we have read the guidance leaflet issued with this form.
_____	Print Name _____
Date _____	

Office use only – application seen by: Headteacher <input type="checkbox"/> / Attendance Officer or Sixth Form administrator <input type="checkbox"/>
Agreement reached: YES/NO
Other outcome: _____
_____ Date: _____

- The Headteacher will consider the following points before authorising leave
1. The student's previous attendance history.
 2. The age of the student
 3. The student's stage of education
 4. The time of year
 5. The nature of the trip (an exceptional experience)

Legal action to enforce school attendance

Poor attendance at WHSG is rare. However, where it does occur, we are not only keen, but also obliged to engage with students and their parents in order to bring about improvement. Ultimately this may necessitate exercising our statutory powers as defined by law. The school will never take such action lightly.

Parents commit an offence if their daughter fails to attend the school regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot, or has not, given permission). Such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Local councils and schools can use various legal powers if a child is missing school without a good reason:

- a Parenting Order
- an Education Supervision Order
- a School Attendance Order
- a fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice')

The local council can issue a fine of £60, which rises to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Prosecution may follow after 28 days, with the possibility of a fine (up to £2,500), community order or jail sentence up to 3 months.

When could a fine be issued?

- A student's attendance is persistently below 90%
- A student is absent for a reason which is not regarded by the school as legitimate.
- A student is absent without permission.
- A student is absent after permission to be absent has been refused.
- Student absence is not explained.
- A student takes a holiday in term time
- Any other circumstance deemed as inappropriate by the Head.

Is a warning given?

When attendance falls below 90%, contact will be made by the school and this constitutes the warning.

The school has the discretion to issue a fine without warning in relation to any holidays taken in term time.

Further information is available from the relevant local authority

Study Leave

In taking decisions about Study Leave, the school notes this statement from the DfE guidance on school attendance (2018):

Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete, and study leave should only ever be granted to pupils in year 11. If schools do decide to grant study leave, provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

All pupils are different and have different requirements and preferences when preparing for examinations. Some schools do seek alternatives to study leave as they recognise that some pupils do not have the skills, or are not inclined, to make the best use of unsupervised and unstructured revision time. However, many schools also recognise that study leave is a chance for pupils to develop their independent study which will help them when they move to post-16 provision, where a self-study approach is commonly used.

Y11 pupils granted study leave should be marked on the attendance register as authorised absence using code S. No other attendance code is suitable for the purpose of study leave. Y11 pupils who are 16 years old are of compulsory school age (up to the last Friday in June) and must be marked on the attendance register accordingly.

Decisions about Study Leave will always be taken in the best educational interests of pupils at the school