



ATTENDANCE POLICY

2026 - 2027

DRAFT SUBJECT TO COMMITTEE APPROVAL

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1. Rationale

Wrotham School is committed to ensuring that every pupil benefits from the educational, social and personal development opportunities provided by regular attendance at school. Good attendance is fundamental to pupils' achievement, wellbeing, safeguarding and future life chances.

We have high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and promote a culture in which attendance is everyone's responsibility. We recognise that some pupils may experience barriers which make attendance more difficult. Where concerns arise, we will work collaboratively with pupils, parents and carers and, where appropriate, external agencies to understand these barriers and provide appropriate support.

Wrotham School's expected attendance for students is 96%.

Attendance is an important part of safeguarding. Patterns of absence, unexplained absence and significant changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate wider welfare or safeguarding concerns. Attendance information will therefore be considered alongside other information known about a pupil and appropriate action will be taken where concerns arise.

Wrotham School will work in partnership with pupils, parents and carers, the Local Authority and other relevant services to promote regular attendance, address barriers to attendance and ensure that pupils receive their entitlement to education.

1.1 Principles

Our approach to attendance is based upon the following principles:

- Every pupil has the right to a full-time, suitable education.
- Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive an appropriate education and, where registered at school, attend regularly.
- Regular attendance and punctuality support academic achievement, personal development, positive relationships and preparation for adulthood.
- Attendance is a shared responsibility across the school and is not solely the responsibility of the attendance team.
- Early identification and intervention are essential. Emerging patterns of absence will be explored before they become entrenched.
- Pupils and families will be listened to and barriers to attendance will be identified and understood.
- Support will be individualised where appropriate, recognising that some pupils may experience additional barriers to attendance.
- Attendance concerns will be considered within the school's wider safeguarding responsibilities.
- Support and intervention will be proportionate to the needs and circumstances of the individual pupil and family.
- Where appropriate support does not result in improved attendance, or where support is not engaged with, the school will work with the Local Authority and other partners to consider further intervention.

1.2 Aims

Wrotham School aims to:

- Promote excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Establish a school culture in which attendance is prioritised by pupils, parents, carers and staff.
- Ensure pupils attend regularly so that they can benefit fully from the educational and wider opportunities available to them.

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- Identify emerging attendance concerns and patterns of absence at the earliest possible stage.
- Understand the individual reasons for absence and work collaboratively with pupils and families to address barriers.
- Provide effective support and intervention where required.
- Reduce overall absence, persistent absence and severe absence.
- Pay particular attention to pupils and groups who may face additional barriers to attendance.
- Use attendance data effectively to identify need, target intervention and evaluate its impact.
- Ensure attendance procedures contribute effectively to the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- Support successful reintegration following periods of absence.
- Work effectively with the Local Authority and other agencies.
- Use formal and legal attendance interventions appropriately and proportionately where required.

A pupil is considered **persistently absent** (PA) when they miss 10% or more of their possible school sessions and **severely absent** (SPA) when they miss 50% or more.

1.3 ABC



Build Accountability of all parties, students, parents and staff for attendance

Build relationships between students and staff, parents and the school to improve attendance

Remove all barriers to attendance of all students to the best of the schools ability

Create a culture in the school of rewarding attendance and promoting it's value

2. Promoting Good Attendance

Wrotham School recognises that improving attendance requires a whole-school approach. All members of the school community have a role in establishing a culture in which regular attendance and punctuality are valued.

The school will:

- Provide a welcoming, safe and positive environment in which pupils know their presence is valued.
- Communicate regularly with pupils and families about the importance of attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise and celebrate good and improving attendance in ways which take account of individual circumstances.
- Monitor attendance accurately and follow up absence promptly.
- Identify emerging patterns of absence and intervene at an early stage.
- Work with pupils and families to understand and address barriers to attendance.

- Work with external agencies and Local Authority services where additional support is required.
- Ensure statutory attendance and registration requirements are followed.
- Support pupils returning following prolonged absence.
- Make reasonable adjustments and provide appropriate support for pupils with additional needs.

2.1 School Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Review and approve the Attendance Policy.
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the school's attendance strategy.
- Monitor attendance information and trends, including persistent and severe absence.
- Hold school leaders to account for attendance.
- Consider attendance within its wider safeguarding responsibilities.
- Ensure appropriate consideration is given to equality and the needs of different pupil groups.

The Headteacher will:

- Maintain high expectations for attendance across the school.
- Ensure attendance has an appropriate strategic priority.
- Ensure the school fulfils its statutory attendance responsibilities.
- Monitor the implementation of this policy.
- Ensure appropriate resources are available to support attendance.
- Report attendance information to the Governing Body.

Attendance Champion – Mr McCracken

The Attendance Champion will:

- Provide strategic leadership for attendance.
- Oversee the school's arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance.
- Work with the attendance and pastoral teams to ensure systems operate effectively.
- Regularly analyse attendance data and identify individual pupils and groups requiring support.

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- Ensure appropriate intervention takes place where attendance concerns emerge.
- Ensure staff understand their attendance responsibilities and receive appropriate training.
- Advise the Headteacher and Governors on attendance trends, priorities and strategies.
- Work with Heads of Year, SEND staff, safeguarding staff and other relevant colleagues to address barriers to attendance.
- Oversee arrangements for pupils on reduced timetables.
- Liaise with the Local Authority and other external services where appropriate.
- Oversee formal attendance intervention where support has not secured sufficient improvement.
- Be involved in reintegration and EBSA support where appropriate.
- Report regularly to the Headteacher and Governors on attendance.

Heads of Year and Heads of School will:

- Monitor attendance within their allocated year group or school.
- Identify pupils whose attendance is causing concern.
- Ensure attendance is discussed appropriately within pastoral teams.
- Work with pupils and parents to identify barriers to attendance.
- Work alongside the Attendance Officer and Attendance Champion to implement appropriate support and intervention.
- Ensure suspected internal or external truancy is followed up.
- Promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Support pupils returning following periods of absence.
- Contribute to EBSA and reintegration support where appropriate.

Progress Tutors will:

- Complete registration accurately and promptly.
- Promote the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Develop positive relationships with pupils and identify emerging attendance concerns.
- Follow up concerns regarding unexplained absence where appropriate.
- Inform the Head of Year and Attendance Officer of potential barriers to attendance or patterns of lateness.
- Support pupils returning following absence.

- Contribute to reintegration and EBSA support where appropriate.

Teaching Staff will:

- Complete lesson registers accurately within 10 minutes of the beginning of each lesson.
- Follow school procedures where a pupil expected to be present is missing.
- Record lateness accurately.
- Report concerns about patterns of absence or punctuality.
- Welcome pupils returning following absence and support their successful reintegration into lessons.
- Avoid questioning pupils publicly about the reasons for prolonged or sensitive periods of absence.
- Contribute to attendance and reintegration plans where appropriate.

The Attendance Officer will:

- Maintain accurate attendance records.
- Enter and review attendance and absence information.
- Follow up unexplained absence.
- Make first-day contact with parents/carers in accordance with school procedures.
- Maintain communication with families where absence continues.
- Produce attendance information and reports for relevant staff.
- Identify pupils whose attendance requires further investigation or intervention.
- Communicate attendance concerns to parents/carers.
- Arrange or contribute to attendance meetings.
- Work with pastoral staff to develop appropriate strategies for pupils with persistent absence.
- Escalate concerns to senior leaders where appropriate.
- Liaise with Local Authority attendance services.
- Maintain appropriate records of attendance interventions.
- Contribute to reintegration and EBSA support.

The SENCO will:

- Support pupils with SEND where additional needs are contributing to absence.
- Work collaboratively with the attendance team, pastoral staff, pupils and families to understand barriers.

- Consider reasonable adjustments and appropriate provision to support attendance.
- Liaise with the Local Authority and other agencies regarding pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans where appropriate.
- Inform relevant staff of changes to educational provision which affect attendance arrangements.
- Contribute to reintegration and EBSA support.

2.2 Parental Responsibilities

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education and, where their child is registered at school, attend regularly.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Promote regular attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time and ready to learn.
- Keep absence to a minimum.
- Inform the school promptly when their child cannot attend and provide the reason.
- Maintain contact with the school during continuing periods of absence.
- Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information.
- Arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever reasonably possible.
- Provide appropriate information or evidence regarding absence where reasonably requested by the school.
- Contact the school promptly where their child is experiencing difficulties which may affect attendance.
- Work collaboratively with the school and other services to address barriers to attendance.
- Attend attendance meetings and engage with support where requested.
- Request any leave of absence in advance.

2.3 Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day unless absence is unavoidable or has been authorised.

- Arrive at school and lessons punctually.
- Attend registration and all timetabled lessons.
- Follow school procedures if arriving late.
- Speak to an appropriate member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties which affect their attendance.
- Engage positively with attendance support where this is provided.

3. Registration, Punctuality and Managing Attendance

Pupils are expected to arrive at school by **8.30am**.

The morning registration period runs from **8.30am until 9.00am**.

Pupils arriving after 8.30am must follow the school's late-arrival and sign-in procedures so that their presence on site is accurately recorded.

There are two statutory attendance sessions each school day: morning and afternoon.

A pupil arriving after registration has begun but before the register closes at **9.00am** will be recorded as late using the appropriate statutory attendance code.

A pupil arriving after **9.00am**, without an authorised reason, will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the morning session using the appropriate statutory attendance code.

Persistent lateness will be monitored. Where concerns emerge, the school will work with the pupil and their parents/carers to understand the reasons for lateness, identify any barriers and agree appropriate actions to improve punctuality. Persistent lateness may result in further attendance intervention.

3.1 Attendance Monitoring

Attendance and absence information will be monitored regularly at whole-school, cohort and individual pupil level.

The school will use attendance information to:

- Identify emerging patterns of absence at the earliest opportunity.
- Identify pupils approaching or meeting the thresholds for persistent or severe absence.

- Identify differences in attendance between pupil groups.
- Identify patterns relating to particular days or sessions where relevant.
- Inform conversations with pupils and families.
- Identify barriers to attendance.
- Target appropriate support and intervention.
- Monitor whether interventions are improving attendance.
- Inform strategic attendance priorities.

Particular attention will be given to pupils and groups who may face additional barriers to attendance, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and pupils known to children's social care.

Attendance information will be shared with the Department for Education and Local Authority in accordance with statutory requirements.

The school's response to attendance concerns will be based upon the individual pupil's attendance, pattern and reasons for absence, needs, circumstances and previous support.

3.2 Responding to Attendance Concerns

Wrotham School recognises that poor attendance can have many different causes and that effective intervention requires an understanding of the individual pupil and their circumstances.

Where concerns emerge, the school may:

- Speak with the pupil.
- Contact parents/carers.
- Explore the reasons for absence and identify barriers.
- Agree appropriate actions and support.
- Arrange an attendance meeting.
- Undertake home visits where appropriate.
- Work with pastoral, SEND or safeguarding staff.
- Seek support from external agencies.
- Agree an attendance improvement plan or other formalised support.
- Refer to Local Authority attendance services where appropriate.

- Consider statutory or legal intervention where support has not resulted in sufficient improvement.

The response will be proportionate to the pupil's level and pattern of absence, the reasons for absence, their individual needs and the support which has already been provided.

4. Supporting Pupils Experiencing Barriers to Attendance

Some pupils will experience barriers to attendance which require additional support. Wrotham School will seek to understand these barriers and work collaboratively with pupils, families and relevant professionals.

Support will be individualised and may involve pastoral support, reasonable adjustments, SEND provision, safeguarding support, reintegration planning or involvement from external services.

4.1 Pupils with SEND

Pupils with SEND may experience additional barriers to attendance.

Where SEND is affecting attendance, the school will consider:

- The pupil's individual needs.
- Whether appropriate reasonable adjustments are in place.
- The suitability of existing SEND provision.
- The pupil's views.
- The views of parents/carers.
- Advice from relevant professionals.
- Whether additional or alternative support is required.

Attendance expectations remain high for pupils with SEND while recognising that the support required to achieve regular attendance may differ between pupils.

4.2 Medical and Mental Health Needs

Where physical or mental health needs affect attendance, the school will work with the pupil, their family and relevant professionals to understand the impact of the condition and identify appropriate support.

The school will not routinely require medical evidence for every period of illness. However, reasonable evidence may be requested where there are concerns about attendance or where this is necessary to understand the pupil's needs and determine appropriate support.

Where a pupil is likely to experience prolonged absence because of medical needs, the school will work with the family, Local Authority and relevant services to ensure that appropriate educational provision and reintegration arrangements are considered.

4.3 Emotionally Based School Avoidance

Where a pupil experiences significant emotional barriers to attending school, the school will seek to understand the underlying factors rather than treating absence in isolation.

Support may include:

- Identification of specific barriers or triggers.
- A trusted adult.
- Adaptations to arrival or transition arrangements.
- Pastoral or SEND support.
- A planned reintegration programme.
- Regular review with the pupil and family.
- Involvement of relevant external services where appropriate.

Support will seek to increase attendance progressively while ensuring that pupils' individual needs are appropriately considered.

4.4 Reintegration and Reduced Timetables

Following significant periods of absence, the school may develop an individual reintegration plan.

A temporary reduced or part-time timetable will only be used in **exceptional** circumstances where it is considered appropriate to meet a pupil's individual needs.

Any such arrangement will:

- Have a clear purpose.
- Be agreed with the pupil's parents/carers.
- Be regularly reviewed – in periods of no longer than 2 weeks.
- Have an intended end date.

- Seek to return the pupil to full-time education as soon as appropriate.
- Be recorded and reported in accordance with Local Authority and statutory requirements.
- Take account of safeguarding considerations – with a clear risk assessment.

Where a pupil has a social worker, they will be kept appropriately informed and involved.

Any Part-Time/Reduced Timetable will be authorised by the Head Teacher, and will have an appropriate risk assessment in place.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The school is responsible for determining the appropriate attendance code for each absence in accordance with statutory requirements.

Parents/carers provide the reason for an absence; the school determines whether the absence can be recorded as authorised.

5.1 Reporting Absence

Parents/carers must inform the school on the first day their child is unable to attend and provide the reason for absence.

Parents/carers should maintain contact with the school on subsequent days in accordance with school procedures and inform the school of the expected return date where known.

Where the school has not received an explanation, attempts will be made to contact the parent/carer.

Where a pupil's whereabouts cannot be established, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures and consider whether further action is necessary.

5.2 Leave of Absence Requests

Parents/carers should request leave of absence in advance.

The Headteacher may grant leave of absence where the circumstances meet the relevant statutory requirements. Each application will be considered individually, taking account of the specific facts and circumstances.

There is no automatic entitlement to leave during term time.

Where leave has not been granted and the pupil is absent, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised using the appropriate attendance code.

5.2 (a) Approved Sporting Events

Wrotham School remains fully committed to supporting our students sporting endeavors outside of school and will work with organisations to ensure that our students can develop their character at all times.

Parents can request authorised leave for officially organised sporting events, and these will be reviewed on a case by case basis, taking into account safeguarding, current levels of attendance and academic progress.

Parents can request sporting leave using the sporting leave absence form, available upon request from the attendance team.

5.3 Illness and Medical Appointments

Absence due to genuine illness will be recorded using the appropriate attendance code.

Routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside school hours wherever reasonably possible.

Where an appointment must take place during the school day, pupils should attend school for as much of the day as reasonably possible.

The school may request reasonable supporting information where there are concerns about the frequency, duration or reason for absence.

5.4 Religious Observance

Absence may be authorised for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs, in accordance with statutory requirements.

Parents/carers should inform the school in advance wherever possible.

5.5 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils

Wrotham School has the same high attendance expectations for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils as for all pupils while recognising the specific statutory arrangements which may apply to travelling for occupational purposes.

The school will work with families and the Local Authority to ensure attendance is recorded appropriately and continuity of education is maintained.

5.6 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will be unauthorised where the reason provided does not meet the statutory requirements for authorised absence or where no satisfactory reason has been provided.

Examples may include:

- Truancy.
- Unexplained absence.
- Arriving after the register has closed without an authorised reason.
- Shopping or birthdays.
- Oversleeping.
- Looking after siblings or other family members, outside of Young Carer responsibilities.
- Absence because of inadequate uniform.
- Confusion regarding school term dates.
- Leave taken without authorisation.

Where a pupil is reluctant or unable to attend because of emotional, mental health, SEND or other barriers, the school will seek to understand and address those barriers while ensuring attendance is recorded in accordance with statutory requirements.

5.7 Holidays in Term Time

Parents/carers should arrange holidays during school holiday periods.

A holiday during term time will not normally constitute an exceptional circumstance for which leave of absence can be granted.

Where a pupil is taken out of school without leave being granted, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Unauthorised term-time leave may result in referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a penalty notice or other attendance intervention.

6. Formal Attendance Intervention and Penalty Notices

Wrotham School will seek to work collaboratively with families to improve attendance and provide appropriate support.

Where voluntary support has not resulted in sufficient improvement, or has not been engaged with, attendance support may be formalised.

This may include:

- A formal attendance meeting.
- An agreed attendance action or improvement plan.
- A Notice to Improve where appropriate.
- Involvement of the Local Authority.
- Consideration of a Penalty Notice.
- Other statutory attendance intervention or prosecution where appropriate.

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the National Framework and Local Authority arrangements.

The national threshold for considering a Penalty Notice is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks**. These sessions do not need to be consecutive and the period may span different terms or school years.

Meeting the national threshold does not mean that a Penalty Notice will automatically be the most appropriate response in every case. The school and Local Authority will consider the circumstances of the individual case and the support already provided.

Where a Penalty Notice is issued, the applicable amount and arrangements will be those set nationally at the time the notice is issued.

The school may refer unauthorised term-time leave, persistent unauthorised absence and persistent late arrival after the register has closed to the Local Authority where the relevant criteria are met.

Formal intervention will not replace appropriate support where barriers to attendance exist.

7. Children Missing Education

Wrotham School recognises that children missing education may be at significant risk of underachievement, harm, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns.

Where a pupil stops attending and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will make appropriate enquiries and follow its safeguarding and Children Missing Education procedures.

The school will work with the Local Authority and other relevant agencies to establish the pupil's whereabouts and circumstances.

A pupil will only be removed from the admission register where one of the statutory grounds for deletion applies and all required procedures have been completed.

Where required, the school and Local Authority will undertake reasonable enquiries before a pupil is removed from roll.

Parents/carers who intend to remove their child from Wrotham School should inform the school and provide appropriate information regarding the child's future education.

The school will make all required notifications to the Local Authority regarding additions to and deletions from the admission register.

8. Working Together to Improve Attendance

Successfully addressing absence requires pupils, families, schools, Local Authorities and other services to work collaboratively.

Wrotham School's approach reflects the principles of *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*:

EXPECT

We maintain high expectations for attendance and punctuality and communicate these clearly to pupils and families.

MONITOR

We monitor attendance information closely and identify patterns of absence and pupils requiring support.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

Where attendance concerns arise, we seek to understand the reasons for absence and listen to the views of pupils and families.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

We work with families to remove barriers within school and help pupils and families access appropriate support where barriers exist outside school.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where voluntary support has not resulted in sufficient improvement, the school may formalise attendance support and work with the Local Authority and other services.

ENFORCE

Where support has not been successful or has not been engaged with, and where it is appropriate to do so, statutory attendance intervention may be considered.

The purpose of this approach is to address the causes of absence and secure sustainable improvements in attendance. There is no 'blanket' policy with attendance, each case is reviewed based on the individual needs of the student, as outlined in Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

9. Attendance and Safeguarding

Attendance is an important safeguarding indicator.

Unexplained absence, repeated absence, significant changes in attendance and patterns of absence may indicate that a pupil requires additional support or that safeguarding concerns are present.

The school will:

- Follow up unexplained absence promptly.
- Consider attendance information alongside other safeguarding information.
- Share concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate.
- Maintain appropriate contact with families.
- Undertake home visits where appropriate and in accordance with school procedures.
- Work with children's social care and other agencies where necessary.
- Take appropriate action where a pupil's whereabouts cannot be established.

Staff should report concerns about a pupil's attendance or whereabouts in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of the school's attendance strategy will be reviewed regularly.

Senior leaders will monitor:

- Whole-school attendance.
- Persistent absence.
- Severe absence.
- Attendance by year group.
- Attendance of significant pupil groups.
- Patterns and trends in absence.
- Punctuality.
- The impact of attendance interventions.

Attendance information will be reported regularly to the Headteacher and Governing Body and used to identify priorities for further improvement.

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The school will evaluate the impact of its attendance strategies and adapt its approach where interventions are not securing sufficient improvement.

11. Contact Information

Headteacher: Mrs Laura Abbott

Attendance Champion: Mr McCracken

Attendance telephone: 01732 905860 (EXT 201)

Attendance email: Attendance@wrotham.kent.sch.uk

Attendance can also be reported via the Arbor Parent app.

Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the school at the earliest opportunity where their child is experiencing difficulties which may affect attendance.

12. Related Guidance and Legislation

This policy should be read alongside current versions of relevant statutory guidance and legislation, including:

- Department for Education – *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*
- Department for Education – *Children Missing Education*
- Department for Education – *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- Department for Education – *Mental Health Issues Affecting a Pupil's Attendance: Guidance for Schools*
- Department for Education – *Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions*
- Department for Education – *Behaviour in Schools*
- Department for Education – *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England*
- *Education Act 1996*
- *Education Act 2002*
- *Education and Inspections Act 2006*
- *Equality Act 2010*
- Relevant School Attendance Regulations and amendments
- The National Framework for Penalty Notices
- Kent County Council attendance and Children Missing Education procedures.

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This policy will be reviewed annually and updated where statutory guidance or legislation changes.