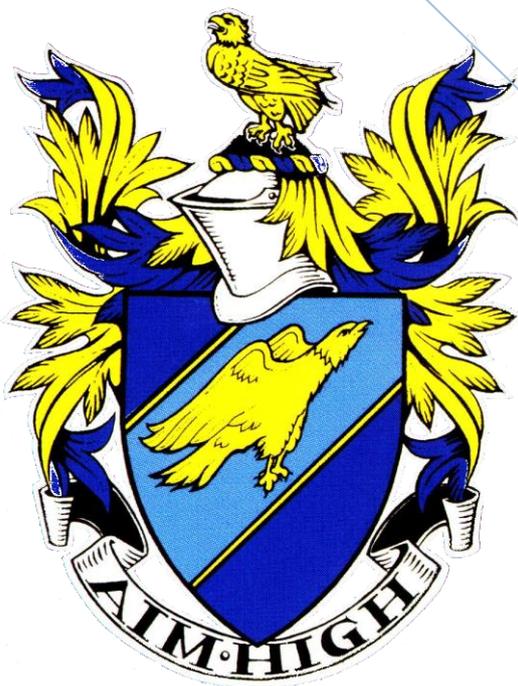


West Hill School



Attendance Policy

Reviewed by Behaviour and Safety
Committee: Autumn 2016

Next review: Autumn 2019

Author: Mr K Wick

WEST HILL SCHOOL RECOGNISES THAT:

- Most students attend school regularly to learn, to socialise with friends and prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and prosperity of the community.
- There is a clear link between students' achievement and their level of attendance at school. We want all the students to achieve the very best they can and for this they need to be in school regularly.
- Late arrival disrupts the education not only of the student who is late but also of others in the class.
- It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children attend the school where they are on roll.
- Some students and their parents/carers may need to be supported at times in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.

WEST HILL SCHOOL EXPECTS

All students will:

- Arrive by 08:45, appropriately prepared for the day, and register.
- Attend school regularly, and for the whole school day, until 14:55.
- Inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that affects their attendance at school.

All our students' parents/carers will:

- Ensure their children attend school every day unless they are too ill to attend or there is an acceptable reason for absence.
- Ensure their children arrive on time, prepared and equipped for the day.
- Inform the school (0161 338 2193) by 09:00 on the day, if their child is going to be absent.
- Parents may also inform school via the new "School Comms/Gateway" website and smartphone app which are available via the school website.
- Communicate with school about their children's progress and attend meetings such as Parents' Evenings and attendance contract meetings.

West Hill School will:

- Provide students with appropriate education.
- Respond to concerns raised by both students and parents/carers in a prompt, fair and proper manner.
- Follow the procedures of school and the Attendance and Engagement Service in dealing with attendance issues.

Communicating Parents' responsibilities: the need for regular attendance and punctuality.

The School ensures that parents are:

- Aware of pupils attendance achievements on a regular basis via their progress assessments and at every Parents Evening.
- reminded of their statutory duties
- aware of the schools' requirements as regards notification of absence

Parents are made aware of their statutory duties and requirements in a number of ways.

- **All parents'** are given a copy of the schools attendance procedures/requirements at the New Intake Parents Evening.
- Parents of children joining the school later in the year are also given a copy of these requirements.
- Attendance requirements are also circulated frequently in the headteacher's letter sent to every parent on a termly basis.
- Attendance requirements are also published on the school website.

The School's Categorising of absence for registration purposes:

The Law

Parents can be prosecuted under the **Education Act of 1996** for failing to ensure their child's attendance at school with the following exceptions:

- the pupil was absent with permission from an authorised person within school
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious group to which the family belongs
- the school is not within walking distance of the home and no suitable arrangements have been made for transport to school, boarding accommodation or enabling the child to be registered at a school nearer his/her home.

There are also some exceptions for the children of travellers.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16 (at the time of writing this policy).

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 – as amended by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Categorising absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness:

- Where the school is satisfied that absence due to illness is justified it will be marked (I).
- Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. In extreme cases the school may require a doctor's note stating that the child was not fit to attend school in respect of that illness/absence.
- Where the school is not satisfied that the absence is justified it may be categorised as 'unauthorised absence' – code (O).

Medical/Dental Appointments:

- Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

Other Authorised Circumstances:

- This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package. It is for the school to determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not. It will clearly depend on the circumstances. These absences should normally be marked as code (C).

Family Holidays and Extended Leave:

- Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for a holiday or any other purpose and should be made aware that if their child is absent for any amount of time that their education may be impaired.
- The Headteacher may not grant leave of absence in term time unless an application has been made **in advance**, to the Headteacher, by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides and the Headteacher, or a person authorised by them, considers that the absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstance relating to that application.
- In all cases parents will be required to justify why the leave of absence needs to be taken during term time.
- If permission to take leave of absence is not granted and the pupil is still taken out of school in term time, the absence will be categorised as **unauthorised**. In such cases the register will be marked code (G) or (O) and the school may apply to Tameside MBC Education Welfare Service for the issue of a Penalty Notice.
- Where leave of absence is granted, if a pupil fails to attend school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted, the Headteacher may delete the pupil from the school roll (Admission Register) in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended). This means that the child may lose their school place.

Family bereavements:

- Schools should respond sensitively to requests for leave of absence to attend funerals or associated events. They have discretion to authorise such absences. Where a pupil is absent for more than the agreed period early contact should be made with the family. Authorised absences in this respect should be marked as (C) in the register.

Days of religious observance:

- An offence is not committed where the absence results from participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. These absences should be marked as (R) in the register. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised. In line with other absences parents should give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

Interviews:

- Where a child attends a job interview or application for a place at an institution of further or higher education the school has discretion to authorise the absence. Schools should expect and ask for advance notification. These absences should be marked as (J) in the register.

Work experience and public performances:

- Leave of absence may be granted for work experience or to participate in approved public performance. These absences should be marked as (W) in the register. If the student is then absent from the work experience or performance this will constitute unauthorised absence.

Off-site activities:

- These fall into two categories, school directed e.g. educational visits and individual activities, e.g. music examinations. Where a small group is involved and not at the place of normal registration such absences will be classed as authorised. These absences should be marked as (P) Sporting activity; (V) Educational Visit in the register.
- Where the activity is of a more individual nature the school can authorise absence at its discretion. If a registered pupil requires special off-site tuition leave of absence may be granted and the absence treated as authorised. These absences should be marked as (B) in the register.

Excluded pupils:

- Where a pupil has been temporarily excluded he or she should remain on the school roll. This should be treated as authorised absence. If a pupil has been excluded permanently his absence should be treated as authorised until after review. Once the exclusion is confirmed he or she should be struck off the school roll. These absences should be marked as (E) in the register.

Pupils at referral units:

- Off-site units are required to keep attendance records. Provision is made for dual registration to facilitate return to mainstream. The pupil must be classified as authorised absent when he or she is not attending. Arrangements of this kind need to be formalised in writing. These absences should be marked as (B) in the register.

Traveller Children:

- Travellers are protected from prosecution if they can show that the nature of their trade requires travel from place to place and that the child has attended school as regularly as possible. Also where the child has attained the age of 6 years and has made at least 200 attendance's during the previous 12 months. Traveller absence should marked (T) in the register.

PROCEDURES WHEN A CHILD IS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL

Reporting Absences

In order to maximise the safety of the children, it is important that all parents/carers follow the procedures for reporting child absence from the school.

Procedure for reporting illness/absence:

- Parents/Carers should contact the school before 08:45 to report a child's absence.
- Estimate how long the absence will be for.
- Contact school again on the morning of the estimated return if absence is to continue. Keep following this pattern until the child returns to school.
- On returning to school, parents should confirm the illness/absence by way of a written letter or note in the child's planner. This should be shown to the Form Tutor or Attendance Officer.

Ways to contact school to report Medical/Dental Appointments/ Illness/Absence:

- Fill out the online form on the school website you will receive a confirmation email.
- Phone the school's absence line (**0161 338 2193**) where a message can be left.
- Send an email to absence@westhillschool.co.uk.
- Parents may also inform school via the new "School Comms/Gateway" website and smartphone app which are available via the school website.
- Text **07624 804431**.

Procedure for reporting Medical/Dental Appointments:

- Parents/Carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day.
- A few days prior to the appointment, please inform the school either by: appointment card, letter, a note in the child's planner or ring **0161 338 2193** to state the date/time and the approximate duration of the appointment.
- Make contact even if your child is coming later e.g.: after a doctor or dentist appointment, if they are not going to be in school by 8.45am.

If a pupil is recorded absent, with no reason, at his morning registration a notification will be sent to the parent/carer through the 'Keep Kids Safe' messaging service or "School Comms/Gateway". These services notify the parent/carer that their son is not in school and requests a response to determine the reason why.

School response to absence

1. Child is absent.
2. Absence at morning registration will be recorded by form tutor via the electronic register on SIMS.
3. If the parent/carer has not already contacted the reception office to notify that their child will not be attending, West Hill School will seek an explanation for absence as soon as possible via the Keep Kids Safe (KKS) messaging service or 'School Comms/Gateway' (as above).
4. If a satisfactory explanation is given the reception office or Attendance Officer (AO) will record absence as authorised on SIMS.
5. If no satisfactory explanation for the absence is given the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and marked (O) in the register. The AO/Form Tutor (FT)/Head of Year (HoY) will endeavour to make contact with the parents to discuss the problem.
6. If the child is going to be legitimately absent for a long period of time the school will provide work for home completion and maintain contact with the parent.

The school does not have to accept the parents offered explanation as a valid reason for absence. **Pupils should be made aware of this option on a regular basis.**

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Waiting for uniform to dry
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school
- Waiting in for an expected postal/parcel/goods delivery

Long Term Absence

- If the reported absence is to be long term the Head of Year (HoY) will be informed. The HoY will then be responsible for co-ordinating the collecting of appropriate work for the absent pupil. This work should then be passed on to the parents or outside agency dealing with the pupil in question. During a long absence the school will arrange periodic contact with parents or with any relevant outside agency.

The pupil returning after a long period of absence

- This can be an uncomfortable time for the child and for the rest of the class. Friendship groups may have altered and changes may have taken place for which both parties must be prepared.

A number of strategies may be adopted to help a pupil return to school:

- active involvement of the school's Behaviour Mentors and Learning Support Unit staff in the planning process also HOY, AO, Form Tutor etc.
- a welcoming attitude from staff and the avoidance of sarcastic comments
- a visit to the school by the pupil prior to the return to overcome initial fears, part-time attendance or a reduced timetable to ease the pupil back into the routine
- special teaching provision and help in catching up on work, the provision of a mentor, with whom the pupil has a special relationship and time to report back to him or her during the day
- preparation of the class for the pupils return

Unauthorised absence

This type of absence has three aspects,

1. Parentally condoned absence - This can be every bit as damaging as the more traditional forms of truancy. However, this type of condoned unjustified absence needs to be treated in a much more sensitive manner. Communication needs to be established to discuss the nature of the absence and remind the parent what constitutes justified absence. The parent, however, needs to be left in no doubt that only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. Where parentally condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem with a particular pupil, the relevant departmental staff will work with the pupil and parents to resolve the issue.
2. Short term truancy - This type of unauthorised absence is when a pupil deliberately absents himself/herself from school for part of or for the whole day. This type of truancy may be short term in nature if caught in the early stages and the reasons for the truancy are fully explored with the pupil. This task can be usually carried out by the pupils own Form Teacher, Head of Year, AO or Behaviour Mentor. The pupil's truancy should then be reported to the parents by the Head of Year or AO. Short term truancy is usually detected through the schools system of form and lesson registration. Therefore, both staff and pupils should see the taking of a register as an important and integral part of the school day.
3. Long term and frequent truancy - The attendance pattern of individual pupils may be identified as giving cause for concern. For these individuals the school will need to take specific action. This will include contacting parents to ascertain the reason for the absenteeism.

The parents may be:

- unaware of the absence
- aware but unable or unwilling to do anything about it
- actively encouraging the absence

On the basis of discussions with the pupil and parents the school will devise an action plan. This will outline the steps the pupil can directly implement the necessary plan and monitor its effectiveness. This action plan may involve the pastoral/academic staff, the AO and parents.

The circumstances of each case will be unique and require different combinations of strategies. Such as:

- helping with special needs
- designating an individual member of staff or pupil as a mentor
- developing a modified time-table - LSU
- regularly reviewing progress

Finally, truancy not only damages the educational progress of the truanting pupil but can affect other students. They may be neglected while teachers help truants to catch up with work. Persistent absentees may also influence other pupils to follow suit. Importantly, if staff and the school are seen as not attempting to maximise attendance this transmits a negative, if unintended, message to pupils and parents alike, i.e. that teachers do not care whether pupils attend or not.

Consistency of response to absence

To be effective the response from the school must be consistent, thorough and well publicised. The follow up must be carried out in the same way for each pupil on every occasion of absence. The follow up will include phone calls, letters, home visits and invitations for the parents to visit the school.

School Procedure for Absence:

All cases of absence due to genuine illness will continue to be monitored by the School Attendance Officer, who will maintain liaison with Form Tutors, Heads of Year, Behaviour Mentors and other relevant departments within the school. Where the AO may have concerns regarding absence though reported illness he/she may visit the home of the pupil.

All absence due to pupil truancy will be dealt with in the same way. Parents will be informed of the truancy and the pupil's attendance monitored via SIMS and, if necessary, by report. Parents of identified truants – those over five days – may be invited to a meeting of the attendance panel and their son should be expected to follow a programme of intervention. Parents of persistent truants – those over ten days – may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution.

Absence / truancy, if confirmed to be condoned by parents will be dealt with in the same way and the relevant parents will be made fully aware of their legal obligations.

Lateness, the school response

The encouragement of punctuality has a high priority within the ethos of the school. A pupil arriving late may disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others.

For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. Any pupil arriving late during form registration should report to their form tutor, those arriving after the end of form registration should sign in at the attendance office. If there is no valid reason for the lateness they will be given a detention.

Pupils should be made aware of their poor punctuality and marked late by the form teacher.

Pupils arriving late from a valid medical appointment/treatment will be given their mark on production of a valid appointment card/letter.

THE LATE BOOK SHOULD BE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN EMERGENCY EVACUATION ALONG SIDE THE OFFICIAL REGISTERS. THE RECEPTION OFFICE IS TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS DOCUMENT.

SCHOOL REGISTRATION TIMES

The school day consists of five, one-hour lessons. There is a morning break at 11.05 and lunch is taken for a thirty minute period, between 12.25 and 13.55. Lunch is timetabled into two sessions with Year 7 pupils always being on the first session at 12.25. Other pupils are assigned to one of the lunch breaks according to the timetable.

Form Period/Assembly	8.45am - 9.05am
Period 1	9.05am - 10.05am
Period 2	10.05am - 11.05am
Break	11.05am - 11.25am
Period 3	11.25am - 12.25pm
Period 4	12.25pm - 1.55pm (including lunch*)
Period 5	1.55pm - 2.55pm (includes final registration)

**Lunch Rota*

First Lunch	12.25pm - 12.55pm
Second Lunch	1.25pm -1.55pm

LATES -

Pupils who are late:

If a boy arrives before 09:05 he should go to his registration group and his Form Tutor should mark him as late and deal with appropriately (this may be a morning break detention on that day).

If he arrives after 09:05 he should sign the late register which will be kept by the AO in normal circumstances. The AO will put a note in his planner to see his Form Tutor at morning break time and he will also email the Form Tutor to let them know he has done this.

Persistent lates (3 + in a week) the AO will inform the boy's HOY and make an entry on his SIMS Behaviour Management record.

If a boy arrives in school after 10:00 without a valid reason he will be marked 'Late after registers close' (U).

Pupils (*late*) with valid medical appointments will be credited with their mark - SIMS Code (M) - on production of:

1. Proof of appointment
2. That, only a reasonable amount of time was spent on the appointment

Registration:

REGISTRATION: The School **must** keep an attendance register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The absence must be registered as authorised or unauthorised.

Registers must be kept accurately as they may be used in evidence in cases where parents are being prosecuted for school attendance offences.

PROCEDURES FOR FORM REGISTRATION

Procedures for the completion are given in the staff handbook.

1. It is very important that these procedures are strictly adhered to by every member of staff. Each tutor is legally responsible for the register, i.e. that it is an accurate and up to date record of pupil attendance.
2. Registration is electronic using SIMS.

Registration should take in the following conditions and procedures:

- All pupils should be sitting down.
- Registers should be taken in silence.
- **Unless officially informed otherwise or by prior arrangement**, no pupils should be recorded as present unless actually seen by the tutor during registration.
- Pupils should only be allowed to leave the registration period in extreme circumstances.
- There must be an entry for each pupil missing - a pupil who is not physically present cannot be marked as anything other than absent (see above for exceptions).

SUBJECT ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION

Subject electronic registration has an important part to play in the promotion of good attendance and punctuality. Attendance and punctuality should not only be seen as a pastoral matter but as a whole school responsibility. Truancy can and does, take place after registration.

To promote good punctuality and detect post-registration truancy a class registers should be taken at the beginning of each lesson (within the first 10 minutes).

The regular and prompt taking of a subject register will also help to:

- Monitor particular pupils prone to truant.
- Monitor attendance at particular lessons.
- Identify timetabling problems.
- Confirm to truanting pupils that they can no longer avoid detection.

Subject Teachers detecting or suspecting truancy from their lessons should contact the H.O.Y, Head of Department, Behaviour Mentor or AO. It is the responsibility of the subject teacher to take action over truancy from their lesson. Where a pupil is not at his usual subject lesson but is with another member of staff, that member of staff should ensure that the pupil is marked in the register by going through the following procedure in SIMS: **Focus – Lesson Monitor – Edit Marks – (Group Type) Individual Student.**

Registration of Pupils Off-Site

Off-site, i.e. pupils attending college, educational visits/sports events or being educated off-site by outside agencies will be marked in the register by the AO or the school reception office.

Pupils attending college or receiving their education through an outside agency will have their attendance monitored by the AO, who will amend any anomalies on receipt of the college / outside agency register confirmations.

Relevant staff should be made aware of pupils receiving their education through an outside agency.

Pupils going out of school as a group should be listed, stating the nature of the visit, date and time off-site. This list should be lodged with the reception office in good time before the visit.

If a group or individuals arrive back in school midway through a session they should be entered on a temporary register sheet available at and kept by the office.

FOR THE PURPOSES OF A FIRE DRILL OR A GENUINE EVACUATION, PUPILS OFF-SITE WILL BE CONSIDERED AS ABSENT. IF THEY RETURN DURING A SESSION THE TEMPORARY SHEET FILLED IN ON THEIR RETURN, BY THE TEACHER IN CHARGE OF THE VISIT/ACTIVITY, WILL BE USED AS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE OFFICIAL REGISTERS AT THE EMERGENCY ASSEMBLY POINT. THE OFFICE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS DOCUMENT.

Monitoring and identifying patterns and causes of absence.

Whatever system of monitoring attendance is used it must meet the needs of those following up absence. To improve attendance the school must understand its existing patterns of attendance and the reasons for it.

At West Hill attendance is monitored largely through 1st Day Contact Procedures, the daily contact of Form Tutors, Subject Teachers, Heads of Year, the use of the SIMS attendance module and the AO.

YEARS, FORMS, TEACHING GROUPS AND PUPILS WITH LESS THAN TARGET ATTENDANCE.

Where attendance or punctuality for forms, teaching groups, year groups drops below target (95%), initiatives will be made to improve matters. However, it must always be born in mind that any attendance statistic is a collection of individual achievement. Therefore, in seeking a solution to what may be a whole school/year/form issue, it is to the individual we must turn.

A number of practical ways are employed by the school in addressing this problem.

Making **same day contact** with parents of known truants. The Form Tutors to inform H.O.Y. and AO of targeted pupils non-attendance at registration.

- personal interviews with pupils whose attendance achievements are causing concern.
- sending letters to parents regarding school attendance with slips for them to respond.
- setting up meetings between Pupil/Staff/AO to discuss problems.
- from interviews/meetings carried out with individuals identify poor attendance that is possibly caused by whole school issues e.g. problems relating bullying, ethnic groupings, travelling or difficulties with the curriculum etc.
- make pupils aware through the regular (*weekly/termly*) publication of attendance achievements at assemblies/year meetings and through the form registers.

PUPILS SIGNING OUT OF SCHOOL DURING A SESSION

Pupils leaving the school for any reason must sign out at the office using the book provided for this purpose. When they return they should also sign in using the same book. This procedure should be monitored by an appropriate member of the office staff. Pupils leaving the school site during the school day should:

- **have given good reason to leave school to their Form Teacher**
- **have got the signing out book filled in giving reasons for absence, time of absence**
- **Pupils entering school after their temporary absence should sign in giving their time of arrival**

The signing out book is to be monitored by staff from the Reception office.

FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN EMERGENCY EVACUATION THE SIGNING OUT BOOK SHOULD BE USED ALONG SIDE THE OFFICIAL REGISTERS. THE OFFICE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS DOCUMENT.

The Role of the Pastoral Staff: Attendance

The excellent practice, developed over many years and through the hard work of many people can only be maintained if **ALL** staff are aware of the procedures and where to go for support. It is equally important to ensure that all pupils are made fully aware of what, exactly, is expected of them; where, or to whom, they should go if in difficulty and what the consequences of their actions will be.

The pastoral system at West Hill is crucial in creating the atmosphere and environment within which pupils are well motivated to attend school. **THIS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL STAFF** and extends from providing a stimulating working environment to providing support for pupils with problems/difficulties.

The Role of the Form Tutor: Attendance

- Promotes the value of good attendance and punctuality with the pupils.
- Identifies to the Heads of Year those pupils worthy of praise
- Registers the pupils in the morning
- Monitors notes and is aware of patterns of absence through health reasons
- Pursues pupils who forget absence notes
- Refers any concerns about absences or patterns of absence to the AO and the Head of Year.
- Holds a half termly review with each pupil where attendance has been a problem
- Liaises regularly with the AO and the Head of Year on a formal and informal basis to discuss pupils causing particular concern.

The Role of Head of Year: Attendance

- To help to promote the value of good attendance in school with all pupils.
- To present attendance certificates for good attendance termly.
- To review pupil attendance and punctuality regularly
- To refer pupils to the AO for visits where there is no response to poor attendance.
- To meet regularly with form tutors both formally and informally as circumstances demand.
- To help deal with incidences of truancy, put pupils on report and monitor that report.
- To use attendance as part of a targeting process (*Raising Achievement*) as and when necessary.

The Role of the School Attendance Officer

- To help to promote the value of good attendance in school with all pupils i.e. to provide attendance figures for HOY, produce termly attendance certificates for 100% attendance, speak to pupils on a personal basis about their attendance and punctuality.
- To inform parents of their statutory responsibility on matters of attendance and punctuality through News Letters or contact with parents etc.
- To devise ways, in consultation with the staff, of improving individual pupil and whole school attendance.
- To assist form tutors in matters of registration.
- To review Registers/Lateness/Absence and Signing-Out books daily.
- contact those parents whose children are marked as absent without authority and make visits when necessary.
- To liaise between the Year Heads, Form Tutors and outside agencies on matters of pupil attendance.
- To make home visits where there is no response to school enquiries.
- To deal with incidences of truancy.
- Monitor each Year/Forms attendance and be aware of patterns and causes of absence. Report these patterns to Form Tutors/H.O.Y./SLT.
- Have the necessary authority to authorise absences as required.
- Produce data of attendance and punctuality for the School/Parents/LA./DfE.
- To help maintain and update SIMS attendance system and make it serve the staff and pupils of the school.
- To review and update the schools attendance policy.

The Role of the School Reception Office: Attendance

The school reception office is responsible for all relevant attendance documents in the case of an emergency evacuation of the building.

The office is therefore responsible for:

- The recording of daily messages from parents concerning absence and the passing on of such information to the relevant member of staff, form tutor etc.
- The administration of the **signing out** system - the holding of lists of pupils on temporary visits during a session.
- The safe evacuation, in the event of an emergency, of the relevant attendance information for that session.
- The administration and upkeep of the school roll.

Rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

The school takes every opportunity to celebrate good attendance and punctuality. The school believes that by rewarding all aspects of positive behaviour an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding can be achieved. There are rewards for good attendance.

Attendance is a personal achievement and all pupils with an attendance of 100% each term will be presented with a certificate to mark that achievement. Pupils with 100% annual attendance will be presented with a special vellum certificate at the school's award ceremony.

Attendance of 95% and above will also be taken into account in the West Hill School Praise Awards.

Dealing with attendance issues

Alongside the rewards (above), the following actions will be implemented:

Less than 93% to 90%	Letter to be sent at the end of each term informing parents that their son's attendance is significantly below the school's average and needs to improve.
Less than 90%	Letter to be sent at the end of each term informing parents that their son's attendance is significantly below the school's average and needs to improve, otherwise they may be subject to intervention in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice if their son has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within that term.

Attendance Panels

The school views the attendance panel as a most serious step. Pupils and Parents who have been invited to attend this type of formal meeting are seen to be failing in meeting their statutory obligations in attendance and punctuality. The families to be interviewed will be chosen after discussion between the SLT Attendance Lead and the AO.

The Panel will consist of:

- One member of the Governing Body
- Head Teacher or SLT Attendance Lead or HoY.
- School Attendance Officer.

Prosecution

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council's Parenting Contract Protocol.

Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.