



Attendance Policy

Head Teacher: Mrs A Rowley-Jones
Attendance Lead: Mrs A Rowley-Jones
Attendance Officer: Miss Paige Taggart

Ratified by Governors: September 2024

Review: September 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Rowley-Jones', written over a faint horizontal line.

At Walderslade Primary School we know that good attendance helps children to achieve well and develop positive learning habits. With this in mind the school aspires to continually develop an exciting relevant curriculum for all children and to meet their needs socially, emotionally and academically within a safe and secure environment.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis.

The school is committed to working with parents and pupils, as we believe that this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. The minimum expected level of attendance for Medway, National, and for any child at our school is **96%**. Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling. We continually monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. We will keep parents updated regularly on their child's progress.

This Policy operates in accordance with the in line with [DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024](#) and [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#) to continue achieving and maintaining high attendance, which the school and its Governing Body intend to follow.

Punctuality

At Walderslade School we expect outstanding attendance and punctuality. Expectations are as follows:

- Children arrive at school between 8.35am and 8.45am (gate closes at 8.45am)
- Registration opens at 8:45am and closes at 8.55am in the morning and afternoon registration opens at 1pm and closes at 1.10pm.
- Children arriving after 8.55am but before 9.25am will be marked L (late), unless they have medical appointments or other authorised reasons for absence. In the afternoon, children would be marked L (late between 1.10pm and 1.20pm).
- Children arriving after 9.25am will be marked as U (after registers closed) - this is unauthorised absence. Children arriving after 1.20pm will be marked as U (after registers closed).

The school has observed that children find it embarrassing to be late, as arriving in the classroom alone draws unnecessary attention to themselves.

If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they must let the school know in advance.

Afternoon registration takes place between 1pm and 1.10pm.

Absence

Absences may be deemed Authorised or Unauthorised, depending on the circumstances. ALL unauthorised absences will be noted on the child's school record and annual report to parents.

If a child is absent, then the parent /carer should inform school by telephone, StudyBugs App or email as soon as possible, and in any case by 9.25 am. After this time the Office will telephone to ensure that the child is safe. This is then recorded. If we are unable to contact a family member the school may carry out a welfare check at home.

The school must be notified on the morning of each absence. An explanation does not automatically mean an authorised absence. In the case of illness, the school has the right to request further information. **Parents/carers cannot authorise any absence, it is ultimately the Head Teacher's responsibility for authorising any absence. However, parents/carers can provide reasons for absence for the school to consider.**

Lateness

If a child is persistently late a letter will be sent home informing the parents of the number of occasions and the teaching time lost.

Other absence

Parents who wish to take their children out of school for any reason must put the request in writing to the Headteacher at least 10 school days in advance. Absence request forms are available in the office. Each application will be viewed on an individual basis.

Absence which will NOT be authorised

- Family holidays
- During the week of KS2 SATS testing in May for year 6 pupils.

Other authorised absence

- Sickness – Only authorised if medical evidence is provided, this can include an appointment card/confirmation text/email or a receipt for over-the-counter medication.
- Medical appointments – Evidence must be provided at all times
- Educational visits including residential, day or visits to other schools arranged by the school
- Exclusion
- Religious festival

Medical evidence will be requested by the Attendance Officer if it hasn't been provided. Medical evidence for sickness and appointments can either be given in person to the office, or emailed to office@walderslade-pri.medway.sch.uk

Welfare Checks

As part of our commitment to safeguarding and wellbeing, where a child is absent from school and we are unable to contact a family member by 12 noon; the school will notify parent/carers by email or phone call prior to carrying out a welfare check at the home. This will be to ensure that the child is safe and well. If a child is absent from school for 5 consecutive days, we will contact the parent/carers and arrange a welfare visit/ call (as appropriate). Both measures are to ensure that any concerns

and reasons for absence, when not clear, are supported and discussed to enable a successful reintegration back into school.

Procedures and Monitoring

These procedures adhere to the DfE and Medway Local Authority guidelines.

The attendance data is managed and monitored by the school's computerised registration, StudyBugs and monitoring systems. This system provides daily, weekly, termly and annual monitoring reports for both absence and lateness.

The Office and Attendance Officer monitors absence on a daily basis and will call parents/carers of children who have not arrived by 9.25am, unless the school has previously been informed of the reason for the absence, to check on the child's wellbeing. If a child has been absent for more than 5 days (10 sessions) without a valid reason being provided the school will inform the Local Authority for further support and guidance.

Parents/carers will be notified in writing if the school has concerns about the persistent lateness of their child arriving at school or their poor attendance record. If, after a discussion with the Headteacher, the problem continues then a formal letter will be sent to remind the parent/carer of their legal responsibility to ensure the child attends school on a regular basis.

If a child's attendance gets below 96%, we will write to you to inform you, and possibly arrange a meeting with the Attendance Officer and/ Head Teacher if necessary. StudyBugs will also send an alert for parents who have signed up to this service. You are able to see your child's attendance at any time via this app.

If a child is persistently late, then a letter will be sent home. If a child continues to be late after a letter has been sent home, then a meeting will be arranged with the Headteacher, which will involve the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP) for Medway Local Authority if necessary.

If over a period of 10 weeks, there is a record of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) or absence drops below 96%, the Medway Local Authority Attendance Officer for Medway Local Authority will be informed. Where a child's attendance at school continues to be irregular or they continue to be persistently late, then Medway Local Authority may issue the parent/carer who lives with the child with a Penalty Notice.

Falling Attendance Flowchart

If your child's attendance falls below 96%, firstly you will receive a letter from the school. This to alert you to the situation, and for us to work in partnership to improve your child's attendance going forward. We will request for you to provide medical evidence for the absence(s) if you have not yet done so.



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If your child's attendance continues to fall, a 'Notice To Improve' Letter will be issued to you.



If your child's attendance continues to decline, despite supportive measures put in place, you will be referred to the local authority.

Notices to improve

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. A Notice to Improve will be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. Where a Notice to Improve is issued, it should be issued in line with processes set out in the Local Code of Conduct for the local authority.

The Notice to Improve will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record
- The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.
- A clear timeframe for the improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks.
- Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

NB – A Penalty Notice may be issued as soon as an unauthorised absence is recorded. Other legal interventions may be considered by the Local Authority.

Where it is clear that improvement is not being made, it may be appropriate to issue a penalty notice before the improvement period has ended. For example, a Notice to Improve stated there should be no further unauthorised absences in a 6 week period but the pupil is absent for unauthorised reasons in the first week. The parent should be informed before a penalty notice is issued if it is before the end of the improvement period.

Penalty Fine Notices

From August 2024, the DfE amended the [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#) so that each parent/ carer who receives their first Penalty Notice for taking their child out of school during term time has to pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. Non-payment of penalty notices may result in prosecution.

First offence

Parent/ carers are required to pay this penalty notice (£80) within 21 days, or the amount will increase (£160) and is expected to be settled within 28 days.

Second offence

If a parent receives a second penalty notice for the same child within any three-year period, the charge will be a flat rate of £160; there will be no reduction if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices for absence before the 2024-25 school year do not count.

Third offence

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice. In this instance, a 'Notice to Improve' notification will not be issued beforehand.

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Section 3 of the Children Schools and Families Act 2010) provides a duty on local authorities of maintained schools to arrange suitable education for those who would not receive such education unless such arrangements are made for them. This education must be full time, or such part time education as is in a child's best interests because of their health needs.

Reduced Timetables

All pupils of statutory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary reduced timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A reduced timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a reduced timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a **C2**, which is an authorised absence.

The school will share the relevant reduced timetable paperwork with the Local Authority who will ensure that the reasons for the timetable are necessary and proportionate.

Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school. Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school.

Participating in a performance:

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher/Principal to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Headteachers/Principals discretion as to whether to authorise this (remains satisfied that this will not have a negative impact on the pupil's education) and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Pupil will be recorded as **C1** in the attendance register.

Participating in a supervised sporting activity:



Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Headteachers/Principals discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher/Principal and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching. Pupil will be recorded as **P** in the attendance register

Home Educated/Education Otherwise

On receipt of written notification to educate otherwise, parents will be invited into the school to discuss the reason for this decision and to seek a way forward that may enable the child to remain at the school if parents are in agreement. If the child does not remain at the school and is educated otherwise, the school must inform the pupils local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register.

Reporting to Local Advisory Board

The Head Teacher will keep the Local Advisory Board (Governing Body) informed of attendance statistics at all meetings.