



William Henry Smith Foundation

Attendance Policy – School & Sixth Form and Specialist College

Policy Details

Status:	In-house
Frequency of review:	Annually
Lead member of staff:	Leanne Clarke
Responsibility of:	Leanne Clarke
Last reviewed:	Spring 2026
Next Review Date:	Spring 2027
Policy Number:	FE10

1.0 Policy

Attendance is everyone's responsibility. The barriers to accessing education are wide-ranging and can be complex, both within and beyond the education setting, and are often specific to individual students and their families. We recognise that every individual's experience is unique; therefore, we take time to listen, understand and respond thoughtfully to the circumstances surrounding each student's attendance, approaching challenges with care, professionalism and curiosity.

Good attendance begins with School/College being somewhere students want to be. The foundation of securing strong attendance is a calm, nurturing and supportive environment where all students feel safe,

respected, heard and valued. We are committed to creating a culture of belonging, where diversity is embraced and every member of the community feels supported to engage, achieve and thrive.

Our ethos regarding attendance is one of working together. We are committed to building strong, trusting relationships with students, families and external partners through open communication, consistency and a shared sense of purpose. Students and families receive holistic, whole-family support that not only addresses barriers to attendance but seeks to understand their root causes, enabling tailored and meaningful support to be put in place.

The William Henry Smith Foundation aims to work in genuine partnership with parents/carers and other agencies to support every student in achieving their highest possible attendance. We hold high expectations for ourselves and others, acting with integrity and accountability to ensure that commitments are followed through and that trust is built over time. Through shared expertise, collaborative working and a belief in every individual's potential, we enable students to access and benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided.

By working in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies, we ensure that clear, consistent and effective strategies are in place to manage and promote regular attendance for all students. We are committed to continuous improvement, using insight, reflection and professional expertise to strengthen our approach, inspire confidence and support every student to achieve more than they thought possible.

School/College Staff to Support Attendance

- The School **Senior Attendance Champion** is Laura Robinson, Vice Principal of Education
Laura.robinson@whsfoundation.org.uk
- The School **Senior Attendance Champion** is Simon Cottong, Head of College
Simon.cotton@whsfoundation.org.uk
- The School/College **Attendance Officer** is Karen Sturgeon
Karen.sturgeon@whsfoundation.org.uk

Please contact the attendance officer on a day-to-day basis when your child/young person is absent or for any queries regarding attendance.

The School/College parent/carer support team are: -

Family Intervention Support Worker	Sue Bradley
School & College Social Worker	Kirsty Helliwell
School Pastoral Lead	Barrie Campbell
College Pastoral Lead	Razwan Amin
School/College Nurse	Sara Hill

To manage and promote regular attendance School/College will:

- Keep parents/carers updated on the School/College's overall attendance and individual student's attendance via letters home, newsletters, social media and School/College website
- Follow the DfE and Government guidance in relation to School/College attendance
- Follow Public Health guidance should any local lockdowns or outbreaks in school occur
- Report to parents/carers how their child/young person is achieving in School/College and how their child/young person's attendance is impacting on this via regular parent/carer communications

- Build positive relationships between home and School/College that can be the foundation of good attendance. The link between attendance, attainment and wider wellbeing will be discussed with parents/carers
- Utilise attendance data, analysing patterns and trends to target attendance and punctuality improvement across student cohorts or individual students, to reduce persistent or severe absence from School/College
- Review the attendance policy annually and publish on the School/College website
- Account for and consider the specific needs of students and their families where there may be other barriers to attendance (medical conditions, special educational needs and disabilities) and provide support to overcome these barriers. (e.g. Family Intervention Support/Early Help or other wider partners)
- Support students back into School/College following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Monitor individual students' attendance to:
 - a) Celebrate good and improved school attendance and reward this through postcards and certificates
 - b) Notify parents/carers when we are worried about their child/young person's attendance by following the **attendance procedure** below.

1. First day calling
2. Follow up unexplained absence by a home visit and informing relevant parties (Social Worker/Virtual Schools/SEND caseworker/Police etc)
3. Communicate with parents/carers and arrange a supportive meeting
4. Implement a bespoke, PBS-aligned and holistic attendance intervention plan that focuses on understanding and addressing the underlying functions of non-attendance, delivered through coordinated internal support and effective external partnerships
5. Inform local authorities and SEND caseworkers

To manage and promote the regular attendance of their children, parents/carers will:

- Understand their legal responsibilities by ensuring regular school/college attendance with regard to the Section 444(1) and 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 and Section 36 of the Children Act 1989
- Understand their responsibility to keep the School/College up to date with at least 2 emergency contact details as required by the Children Missing Education requirements and in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance 2024
- Impress on their children the importance of regular school/college attendance by keeping absences to a minimum and ensuring that children/young adults are only out of school/college when they are too sick to attend or have unavoidable medical appointments
- Establish effective communication with the School/College and swiftly address any worries their children/young adults may have about coming to School/College so that we can work together to resolve this
- Contact School/College on the first day of absence to inform school/college of the reason and when the child/young adult is expected to return. Keep School/College informed if the absence is likely to continue so that School/College and partner agencies can ensure that amendments or alternatives can be made to provision if required
- Provide the School/College with any medical appointment cards and where possible make appointments out of School/College hours. If this is not possible, parents/carers should ensure that children/young adults attend prior to or following their appointment
- Attend any meetings called by School/College and partner agencies to discuss attendance

School Day

School day start time **10.30am** (Monday) **8.30am** (Tuesday-Friday)

College day start time **9:15am** (Monday-Friday)
School day end time **3:30pm** (Monday-Thursday) **1:30pm** (Friday)
College day end time **3:30pm** (Monday-Thursday) **1:30pm** (Friday)

Morning school registers should all be completed by **9:00am**
Afternoon school registers should be completed by **1:15pm**

Morning college registers should all be completed by 9:00am
Afternoon college registers should be completed by 1:15pm

Any students arriving after these times should report to Reception so that they can be given an attendance mark and a member of staff can come and collect them.

Students arriving after 8.30am will be late for school and have to report to the school office/college reception.

Where a student arrives after the register closes, this will be classed as an unauthorised late absence (code U as per DFE compulsory attendance codes).

School registration will close at 9am

Registers are monitored daily to help us identify students who may be arriving late. We work closely with families to support punctuality, as arriving on time helps students make the most of their learning. Where lateness becomes a regular concern, we will discuss this with parents/carers to understand any challenges and offer support. In some cases, where unauthorised absence persists and meets the relevant thresholds, a referral may be made to the Local Authority Statutory Team in line with guidance.

Absences

Parents/carers are expected to inform school of the reason for absences. However, it is School/College that makes the decision whether to authorise or unauthorise the absence. School/College will make this decision based on the information available to them. Parents/Carers are encouraged to provide as much information as possible and information such as appointment cards, medication or application for leave of absence will assist school/college in making this decision. Re-occurring unauthorised absence will be referred to our family support and pastoral team.

Request for leave of absence in term time

School/College has adopted the Local Authority code of conduct (January 2024) in respect of leave of absence in term time. All parents/carers who wish to take their child/young adult out of School/College for any reason (other than medical reasons) should complete a leave of absence request form. If parents/carers proceed with the leave of absence in term time, School/ College may refer to the Local Authority for a penalty notice. Penalty notices may be issued by the Local Authority due to the deliberate taking of leave of absence in term time without or against school permission (where it can be demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not or would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 sessions. The Local Authority fine for school absences will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within

any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a Parenting Order or prosecution will be considered. If a parent is prosecuted and required to attend court because their child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Absence for participation in a performance

In these instances, School/College will follow Local Authority's guidance and by-laws, working in partnership with the Education Welfare Service to ensure that any performance absence is within the parameters of the law.

Religious Observance

School/College acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school/college on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. However, parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent. Religious bodies maybe contacted to verify these occasions.

Safeguarding

Your child/young adult may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school/college regularly. Safeguarding children and young adults is everyone's responsibility. The Attendance Policy has a direct link to Safeguarding Policy; the Positive Behaviour Policy; anti-bullying strategies and the Health and Safety Policy.

The School/College has also adopted the Local Authority Policies on Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education. The School/College also follows Local Authority guidance in relation to coding absence for families who travel as part of their culture. All these policies have been endorsed by our Governing Body, which support the School/College in all attempts to improve the attendance and safeguarding agenda.

Development and implementation of this policy will be considered under School/College obligations from the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.