

Attendance Policy and Procedure

Withington Girls' School

September 2025

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Key School contacts

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Key staff / contacts Kate Murphy – Attendance Officer Beth Wallis – Pastoral Officer	Email: attendance@wgs.org Telephone: 0161 224 1077

1 Aims

- 1.1 This is the attendance policy of Withington Girls' School (the **School**).
- 1.2 The School aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances.
- 1.3 The aims of this policy are as follows:
 - 1.3.1 to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
 - 1.3.2 to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the School is able to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the School;
 - 1.3.3 to prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the School, reduce absence and set out the School's approach to the management of absence / non-attendance;
 - 1.3.4 to recognise the linkages between attendance / absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
 - 1.3.5 to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection.

2 Scope and application

- 2.1 This policy applies to the whole School
- 2.2 This policy is designed to address the specific statutory obligations on the School to record attendance and absence.

3 Regulatory framework

- 3.1 This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:
 - 3.1.1 Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
 - 3.1.2 Education and Skills Act 2008;
 - 3.1.3 Children Act 1989;
 - 3.1.4 Childcare Act 2006;
 - 3.1.5 Education (Pupil Registration Regulations) 2006;
 - 3.1.6 Equality Act 2010; and
 - 3.1.7 Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (**UK GDPR**)
- 3.2 This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:
 - 3.2.1 Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, August 2024);
 - 3.2.2 Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, August 2024);
 - 3.2.3 Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance (DfE, August 2024);

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- 3.2.4 Guidance for Parents on school attendance (Office of the Children's Commissioner, July 2024);
 - 3.2.5 'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance (NHS, April 2024);
 - 3.2.6 Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2025);
 - 3.2.7 Children missing education (DfE, August 2024);
 - 3.2.8 Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (DfE, August 2017);
 - 3.2.9 Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, February 2024);
 - 3.2.10 Mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, November 2018);
 - 3.2.11 Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (DfE, February 2023);
 - 3.2.12 Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE, February 2023);
 - 3.2.13 Providing Remote education: guidance for schools (DfE, updated August 2024); and
 - 3.2.14 SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, May 2015).
- 3.3 The following School policies, procedures and resource materials are relevant to this policy:
- 3.3.1 Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures;
 - 3.3.2 Risk assessment policy for pupil welfare;
 - 3.3.3 Missing pupil policy
 - 3.3.4 Policy on special educational needs and learning difficulties;
 - 3.3.5 Behaviour and discipline policy;
 - 3.3.6 School rules as set out in the Pupil Code of Conduct and other relevant policies;
 - 3.3.7 Parent Contract
 - 3.3.8 Pupil's Individual Plan

4 Publication and availability

- 4.1 This policy is published on the School website and on the Parent Portal.
- 4.2 This policy is available in hard copy on request.
- 4.3 A copy of the policy is available for inspection from the School Office during the School day.
- 4.4 This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

5 Definitions and interpretation

5.1 Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:

5.1.1 references to **attendance** include references to attendance for all or part of the timetabled school day.

5.1.2 references to the **Proprietor** are references to the board of Governors.

5.1.3 references to a **Parent** means:

- (a) all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- (b) any person who has parental responsibility for a pupil; and
- (c) any person who has day to day responsibility for a pupil (i.e. lives with and looks after a pupil).

5.1.4 References to a **pupil** includes anyone who is receiving an education at the school except a person who is 19 or over for whom further education is being provided, or a person for whom part-time education suitable for people over compulsory school age is being provided

5.1.5 **SAC** means the School's attendance champion.

6 Responsibility statement and allocation of tasks

6.1 The Proprietor has overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy.

6.2 The Proprietor recognises that improving attendance is a school leadership issue and has appointed a designated senior leader to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in School, referred to in this policy as the SAC.

6.3 To ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities under this policy, the Proprietor has allocated the following tasks:

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	Jen Baylis and Louise Cordrey, SAC	As required, and at least termly
Monitoring the implementation of the policy	Jen Baylis and Louise Cordrey, SAC	As required, and at least termly
Seeking input from interested groups (such as pupils, staff, parents) to consider improvements to the School's processes under the policy	Jen Baylis and Louise Cordrey, SAC	As required, and at least annually
Formal annual review	Jen Baylis, Louise Cordrey and Jane Allred	Annually

7 The importance of good attendance

- 7.1 The School recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. This is an integral part of the School's ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance it recognises:
- 7.1.1 the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life;
 - 7.1.2 the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions and / or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils;
 - 7.1.3 the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and parents;
 - 7.1.4 that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies; and
 - 7.1.5 children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

8 School responsibilities

- 8.1 The School acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the School community.
- 8.2 The School will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and parents.
- 8.3 Where there are challenges to attendance, the School will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.
- 8.4 The School will respond to non-attendance and / or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the School's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.
- 8.5 The School will have robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

9 Staff responsibilities

The SAC

9.1 The Proprietor has appointed a senior member of staff of the School's leadership team as SAC to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Details of the individual appointed are at the front of this policy and are widely publicised within School.

9.1.1 The SAC's responsibilities are:

- (a) to set a clear vision for improving attendance in school;
- (b) to establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure the systems are followed by all staff;
- (c) to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes;
- (d) to have oversight of and analyse attendance data and
- (e) to communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and parents.

9.2 Staff with specific responsibilities for attendance¹:

The staff identified in Appendix 1 of this policy have day to day responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. They should:

- 9.2.1 have a formal routine for registers being taken accurately each morning and afternoon;
- 9.2.2 record all absences promptly and accurately using the processes specified;
- 9.2.3 seek explanations of absences required from pupils on their return to School;
- 9.2.4 make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and follow up with pupil to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the School;
- 9.2.5 look out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and inform the SAC of any specific concerns;
- 9.2.6 deal with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly;
- 9.2.7 consider appropriate sanctions for pupils who arrive late to a lesson in line with the School's behaviour and discipline policies; and
- 9.2.8 discuss non-attendance and / or lateness with pupils and parents (where possible) and emphasise the importance of punctuality.

¹ The School should provide information and contact details of the staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day to day basis (such as a form tutor, head of year etc) and for more detailed support on attendance (such as a head of year, pastoral lead or family liaison officer etc) in Appendix 1

9.3 **All staff**

9.4 The School ensures that all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents about it.

9.5 The School provides appropriate training and professional development for staff consistent with their roles and responsibilities.

10 **School arrangements**

10.1 The School will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence. These registers must be kept electronically. Contact details of relevant staff can be found at the front of the policy and other details about the School's arrangements can be found in Appendices 1-3.

11 **Monitoring attendance**

11.1 The School will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the School and develop strategies to address them. Such analysis may include:

11.1.1 monitoring and analysing weekly attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families;

11.1.2 using this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead);

11.1.3 undertaking frequent individual level analysis to identify pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeting actions for those cases;²

11.1.4 conducting thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends;

11.1.5 benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement;

11.1.6 devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;

11.1.7 monitoring the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented; and

11.1.8 providing data and reports to the Proprietor to support its work.

² See paragraph 45 of Working together to improve school attendance 2024

12 Pupil responsibilities

- 12.1 School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. The School therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and has systems in place to manage poor attendance.
- 12.2 Pupils should be aware that:
- 12.2.1 they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each School day;
 - 12.2.2 they are expected to arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons;
 - 12.2.3 they should not leave a lesson or the School site without permission or otherwise in accordance with School rules;
 - 12.2.4 they should engage with the School's arrangements for recording and managing attendance as set out in this policy;
 - 12.2.5 any unexplained absence will be followed up;
 - 12.2.6 persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the School. This may take the form of:
 - (a) offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance;
 - (b) communication with parents;
 - (c) reporting to other agencies such as children's social care; and
 - (d) sanctions against them or their parents in line with the School's behaviour policies.
 - 12.2.7 If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending School or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff, although the School encourages them to speak to their Form Tutor in the first instance. Pupils are entitled to expect this information to be managed sensitively.

13 Additional needs

- 13.1 The School recognises some pupils may find it harder than others to attend School, and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.
- 13.2 The School will make reasonable adjustments³ where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with pupils without a disability, in relation to school attendance.
- 13.3 It will also work with parents, and where appropriate with the local authority, to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities e.g. ensuring the provision outlined in a pupils education, health and care plan is accessed⁴.
- 13.4 Where a pupil has an education, health and care plan the School will communicate with the local authority where the pupil's attendance falls or the School become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- 13.5 Suitable strategies and support will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance⁵.
- 13.6 Where barriers are outside of the School's control, the School will work with Parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.
- 13.7 The School will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.⁶

³ In this case to meet the school's duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010.

⁴ The Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools states in the non-statutory summary of responsibilities document that 'in many cases the school may be able to agree with parents / carers adjustments to its policies and practices that are consistent with the special educational provision set out in the EHC plan. In other cases, additional or different attendance support identified may require the LA to review or amend an EHC plan.'

⁵ See Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools which includes a Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance and Support for pupils where mental health is affecting attendance: effective practice examples

⁶ See paragraph 57 of the statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance 2024

14 Parent / carer responsibilities

- 14.1 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.
- 14.2 This means pupils must attend every day that the School is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the School.
- 14.3 The School will help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development and provide clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.
- 14.4 Expectations the School places on parents can be found in Appendix 1 of this policy.
- 14.5 Parents are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the parent contract and failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the School about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the School unreasonably.

15 Training

- 15.1 **Staff:** The School ensures that regular guidance and training on attendance is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles. As a minimum this will include all staff understanding:
 - 15.1.1 the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances; and
 - 15.1.2 the School's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.
- 15.2 Dedicated attendance training is provided to any member of staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. This should include:
 - 15.2.1 the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers;
 - 15.2.2 the process for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it;
 - 15.2.3 the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data; and
 - 15.2.4 any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.
- 15.3 The School maintains written records of all staff training.

16 Information sharing

- 16.1 Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to Government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.
- 16.2 The School, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to a pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms).
- 16.3 Where appropriate the schools will attend regular targeting support meetings.⁷
- 16.4 The School is legally required to share information from the registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:
- 16.4.1 New pupil and deletion returns;
 - 16.4.2 Attendance returns⁸;
 - 16.4.3 Sickness returns.
- 16.5 The law allows local authority officers access to the attendance and admission registers of all types of schools to carry out their functions under the Education Acts to support joint working between schools and local authorities. These officers are also permitted to take digital or physical extracts of the School's registers.
- 16.6 The School must provide specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State. The School meets this requirement by having an electronic management information system containing the required information that can be accessed by the DfE⁹. The School also uses this tool to monitor pupil level attendance and understand trends in attendance patterns.
- 16.7 Where appropriate, the School is expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences.

⁷ Targeting support meetings are meetings local authorities have with schools to discuss attendance data and identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils. See chapter 4 of the statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance 2024.

⁸ Schools are required to provide attendance returns to the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been recorded as absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the national attendance codes (G, N, O, and/or U). Individual local authorities must agree the frequency that attendance returns are to be provided with all schools in their area. This should be no less frequently than once per calendar month - see chapter 2 and content on sharing information in the statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance 2024

⁹ Local authorities may seek, and schools are expected to provide, more frequent or comprehensive sharing of data than the statutory minimum where it is essential to fulfilling their obligations under the Education Acts and expectations set out in chapter 4 of the Working together to improve school attendance 2024 guidance. To avoid any unnecessary burdens for schools this should always be automatic from school registers and not require additional manual data collection/returns (see paragraph 50 of the guidance). Independent schools should note that they are not required to provide the specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State relating to sharing daily pupil attendance data (see paragraph 52 of the guidance). We recommend independent schools consult their information management system providers for more details about the relevant permissions and accessible data..

17 Record keeping and confidentiality

17.1 All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

17.2 The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The School's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has published privacy notices on its website which explain how the School will use personal data.

18 Version control

Date of adoption of this policy	September 2025
Date of last review of this policy	Summer 2025
Date for next review of this policy	Summer 2026
Policy owner (SLT)	Jen Baylis
Policy owner (Proprietor)	Jane Allred
Amendments since adoption	January 2026 – Appendix 5 added

Appendix 1 School arrangements

1 Managing attendance

- 1.1 The School monitors, records and shares data about pupil attendance and, as part of its duty to safeguard and protect pupils and promote attendance, it accurately completes admission and attendance registers as required by law and set out in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 respectively. The admission and attendance registers must be kept electronically and retained by the School for the relevant time period as stated by law.
- 1.2 The School expects all pupils to be present at School for the whole of the School day, usually from registration at 8.50am (pupils should arrive by 8.45am) to close at 3.45pm, but this period may be extended, for example for out of school clubs, sports fixtures or school trips.

2 The role of parents / carers

- 2.1 The School expects all Parents to:
 - 2.1.1 make any application for authorised absence at the earliest opportunity;
 - 2.1.2 notify the School of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible in accordance with this policy and when doing so, give an accurate explanation for this; and
 - 2.1.3 cooperate with the School to explore possible barriers to attendance and to improve it where attendance has been raised as an issue;
 - 2.1.4 ensure their child attends School by 8.45am for morning registration;

3 Registration and attendance checks

- 3.1.1 Morning registration is at 8.50am. The registers will remain open for 10 minutes after the start of morning registration.
- 3.1.2 Afternoon registration will be at 1.10pm at the start of Period 5. The registers will remain open for 10 minutes until 1.20pm.
- 3.1.3 Registers will also be called at the beginning of each lesson in order to identify and follow-up on absences from lessons that might occur after morning or afternoon registration.
- 3.1.4 Once the morning and afternoon registers close, a pupil will be recorded as absent if not present in the classroom / lesson.
- 3.1.5 If a pupil is absent when the register started being taken, but arrives before the register is closed they will be recorded as a late arrival (code L)
- 3.1.6 If a pupil arrives after the register is closed but before the end of the session without a satisfactory explanation, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- 3.1.7 the School uses E-Registration and Attendance Management Systems
- 3.1.8 Sixth form pupils should sign in and out during the school day using Inventory, which updates attendance registers. If they are free during Period 5, they should ensure they are registered between 1.10 and 1.20 as instructed by the Director of Sixth Form.

4 Reporting absence

- 4.1 If a pupil is to be absent from School for any reason, the parent / carer should contact the designated absence line (0161 249 3476) before 9.00am for each day of absence. Where a pupil is ill, the School should be notified of the nature of the illness.
- 4.2 Actions in school to check Attendance:
- (a) Messages taken from Absence line and attendance@wgs.org
 - (b) Teachers complete am or pm registration report
 - (c) Any late arrivals input on Inentry added to Schoolbase
 - (d) Any manual sign in sheets from Reception uploaded to absence system
 - (e) Unauthorised absence report run.
 - (f) Names on reports checked against lesson registers and schoolbase for previous absence notifications. If any vulnerable pupils have unauthorised absence, the Attendance Officer informs the DSL.
 - (g) Text sent to emergency contact 1 by 10am
 - (h) Classroom visit made to ensure girl is not in school
 - (i) All emergency numbers on Schoolbase called and messages left if no notification of absence is received by 10:45am
 - (j) Email sent to all contacts on Schoolbase
 - (k) Email Form Tutor and Head of Year to advise of absence.
 - (l) If there has been no contact from parents/guardians by 12 noon, the Attendance Officer contacts the Designated Safeguarding Lead or another member of SLT to agree next steps.

5 Arrangements for reporting subsequent absence

- 5.1 A parent / guardian must contact the Absence Line on each and every day of the pupil's absence until their return to school. Absence will be recorded on the Attendance Register as set out in Appendix 3.

6 Managing absence

- 6.1 Parents / guardians are required to advise School if their daughter is unable to attend school. To report illness on the day, parents / guardians telephone the designated absence line (0161 249 3476) before 9.00am for each day of absence. To request permission for any other absences, parents / guardians email attendance@wgs.org and the request is forwarded to the relevant member of staff for authorisation. If no email or phone call is received the Attendance Officer contacts parents/guardians, initially by text, at the earliest opportunity. Notification of absence must be from a parent/guardian and cannot be accepted from students.
- 6.2 All unexplained absences will be followed up by the Attendance Officer and/or pastoral staff. Parents of pupils whose attendance rate falls between 90% and 95% during any term will be sent a notification email along with a reminder of the importance of good attendance and the school's attendance leaflet and an invitation to get in touch if they require further support around attendance. Parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 90% during any term will be supported by adoption of a combination of these measures:
- Communication with parents and carers
 - Individual Plan to improve attendance
 - Regular review meetings with allocated staff
 - Reasonable adjustments made to reduce barriers to attendance
 - Inter-agency work such as communication with medical professionals, social care or safeguarding teams linked to the child's outside activities
 - Meetings with designated member of staff after each period of absence
 - If the pupil has had more than 15 days of illness (code I) the child's local authority will be informed
- 6.3 For pupils whose attendance falls below 90% during any term, please also refer to Appendix 5, *Persistent Absence: guidance for staff, pupils and families*.

7 Authorised absences

- 7.1 Authorised absence means that the School has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away (granted an authorised leave of absence) or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.¹⁰

¹⁰ A leave of absence may be granted by the Head or other person the authorised to do so by the proprietor. While the guidance is not specific on this point we recommend it is a member of the school leadership team

8 Applications for authorised absence

- 8.1 Applications for authorised leaves of absence during the School day will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will only be permitted if made in writing by Parents or Guardians to attendance@wgs.org.
- 8.2 The School will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, the pupil's past attendance record and the relevant background context behind the request.
- 8.3 Apart from illness or where there are additional needs, no pupil should be away from School without prior permission from the Head.
- 8.4 Dental or medical appointments should be made during School holidays or after the school day except in cases of emergency when attendance@wgs.org should be informed. Requests for appointments within school hours should be made to attendance@wgs.org; authorisation will be confirmed to parents/guardians and uploaded onto the School management system. Reception staff check Schoolbase or the daily absence spreadsheet maintained by the Attendance Officer to ensure a pupil has permission to leave School. All girls are required to sign out on Inventory when leaving School. Should a prior request for absence not have been received, parents / guardians will be contacted to confirm that they would like to request absence for their daughter to attend an appointment. If parents / guardians are unobtainable, the pupil will be required to stay in School.
- 8.3 If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Head to determine the length of the time the pupil is permitted to be away from School. It will be recorded as an authorised absence. See section 2 of Appendix 3 for more details.
- 8.4 A leave of absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents and pupils belong. Parents are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence in advance.

9 Reporting duties

- 9.1 The School has statutory reporting obligations if a pupil fails to regularly attend their absence is unauthorised. The School must report unauthorised absences for a continuous period of 10 days or more to the local authority.
- 9.2 Each time the School's attendance register is completed it is treated as a contact point for these purposes.¹¹
- 9.3 Action will also be taken in accordance with the Missing child policy and safeguarding and child protection policy if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

¹¹ The School may wish to insert its own definition of contact points e.g. just morning registration

Appendix 2 Admission register

1

- 1.1 In accordance with the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 the School will:
 - 1.1.1 maintain an admission register of all pupils (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) admitted to the School (also known as the school roll); and
 - 1.1.2 inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admission register at non-standard transition points.
- 1.2 The admission register must be kept electronically and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.
- 1.3 The school must ensure that every entry in the School's admission register is preserved for six years beginning with the day on which the entry was made; and every back-up copy of the register is preserved for six years after the end of the school year that it relates to.
- 1.4 The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School, including their date of admission, information regarding Parents and carers and details of the school they last attended.
- 1.5 A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted.¹²
- 1.6 Where the School notifies the local authority that the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the School must provide it with the following information:
 - 1.6.1 the full name of the pupil;
 - 1.6.2 the address of the pupil;
 - 1.6.3 the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
 - 1.6.4 at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives or can be contacted in an emergency;
 - 1.6.5 the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
 - 1.6.6 name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable;
 - 1.6.7 the ground (prescribed in regulation 9) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

¹² Schools must refer to regulation 9 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 for full details of the legal grounds for deleting a pupil from the registers. See also chapter 7 of the statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance 2024.

Appendix 3 Attendance register

- 1.1 The School records and monitors the attendance of all pupils (both of compulsory and non-compulsory school age) in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024¹³.
- 1.2 The School uses the appropriate national attendance and absence codes system to enable it to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with regulation 10 of the Attendance Regulations.
- 1.3 The attendance register is kept electronically and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.¹⁴
- 1.4 The School will also use these records to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) and work with pupils and Parents to resolve any issues before they become entrenched.
- 1.5 The School is required by law to take attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.
- 1.6 On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil is:
 - 1.6.1 physically present in school when the attendance register begins to be taken; or
 - 1.6.2 absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended; or
 - 1.6.3 attending a place other than the school; or
 - 1.6.4 absent.
- 1.7 The circumstances in which a pupil may be recorded as attending a place, other than the school, can include:
 - 1.7.1 Attending educational provision arranged by a local authority;
 - 1.7.2 For an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff;
 - 1.7.3 Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity;
 - 1.7.4 Attending an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by the school as part of the pupil's education;
 - 1.7.5 Attending a place for any other approved educational activity.
- 1.8 Tutors should only use the attendance codes present (/); late (L) or unknown (N). Peripatetic and support staff should only use present at a peripatetic or support lesson (EC); late (L) or unknown (N). The Attendance Officer will change N to the appropriate absence code in line with evidence provided and this policy.

¹³ Regulation 10 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 specifies what information must be included in the attendance register. See also chapter 8 of the statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance 2024

¹⁴ Registers are legal records and the School must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date that the data was entered.

2 **Recording absence**

2.1 Absence will be recorded in Schoolbase in accordance with the national absence codes set out in regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024 and statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' correlating to:

2.1.1 leaves of absence;

2.1.2 other authorised absences;

2.1.3 unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause; and

2.1.4 unauthorised absence.

2.2 The prescribed absence codes are provided in Appendix 4.

3 **Remote education**

3.1 The School is required to record all absence from in-person lessons.

3.2 The School may, in limited circumstances, provide remote education to enable pupils, who are well enough to learn but unable to attend the School site, to keep pace with their education.

3.3 In the limited circumstances when the School decides to use remote education for individual pupils when they are absent, the following will be considered:

3.3.1 ensuring mutual agreement of remote education by the School, parents or carers, potentially pupils, and if appropriate a relevant medical professional. If the pupil has an Education, Health and Care plan or has a social worker, the local authority should also be involved in the decision;

3.3.2 if remote education is being used as part of a plan to reintegrate back to school, putting a formal arrangement in place to review its efficacy regularly, alongside identifying what other support and flexibilities can be put in place to help ease the pupil back to school at the earliest opportunity;

3.3.3 setting a time limit within which the period of remote education provision should be reviewed, with the aim that the pupil returns to in person education with the required support in place to meet their needs.

3.4 Pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code. The School will keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register. Where appropriate, this information may be used to make plans for a pupil's reintegration to school.

3.5 The School will utilise a digital education platform that will be kept up-to-date and keep pupils safe. Staff will remain trained and confident in its use.

4 **Unauthorised absence**

4.1 The "unauthorised absence" code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given and where the School is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence or delayed attendance or where no explanation has been given meaning that the code for "unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance" is not appropriate. Examples include:

- 4.1.1 holiday has not been authorised by the School or is in excess of the period determined by the Headmistress;
- 4.1.2 the reason for absence has not been provided;
- 4.1.3 a pupil is absent from school without authorisation;
- 4.1.4 a pupil has arrived in school after registration has closed and without reasonable explanation.

Appendix 4 Attendance Codes

For further explanation of codes, please see Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, August 2024) or speak to our Attendance Officer.

Attending the school

Code / \: Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed

Attending a place other than the school

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority

Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip

Code P: Participating in a sporting activity

Code W: Attending work experience

Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity

Absent - leave of absence

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.

Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination

Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Code D: Dual registered at another school

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

Absent – other authorised reasons

Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Code R: Religious observance

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded

Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law 388.

Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Absent - unauthorised absence

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school

Code N: Reason for absence not yet established

Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative codes

Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register

Code #: Planned whole school closure

Appendix 5 Persistent Absence: guide for staff, pupils and families

Introduction

Our School's approach to Persistent Absence is grounded in the School's responsibilities under national legislation and statutory guidance, ensuring that every pupil is supported to access education consistently and equitably. More specifically, we are required to follow the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (DfE, August 2024), which promotes a "support first" model — recognising that barriers to attendance are best addressed through early identification, partnership working, and compassionate, proactive intervention.

In line with the Equality Act (2010), we are committed to making *reasonable adjustments* to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not placed at a substantial disadvantage regarding their attendance at School. This duty is *anticipatory*, meaning we actively plan and prepare to meet the needs of pupils with disabilities in advance, rather than reacting to difficulties once they arise. This proactive approach underpins our inclusive ethos and our commitment to equitable access for all learners.

Our procedures also reflect the principles of the SEND Code of Practice (2015), particularly the graduated *Assess–Plan–Do–Review* cycle. This model aligns closely with our *Team Around the Child (TAC)* approach, ensuring that support for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is well-coordinated, evidence-informed, and regularly reviewed in partnership with families and professionals.

Additionally, we recognise our duties in relation to attendance and safeguarding regarding communicating with, working with and making the required statutory returns to the local authority. For example, in accordance with *Working together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, August 2024)* statutory guidance, the School will make a sickness return to the local authority where a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss more than 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days. We work collaboratively with Early Help and other local services to provide joined-up support and ensure continuity of education for all pupils, wherever possible. Pupils whom this affects will be placed at the relevant level detailed below and managed accordingly.

Aims

At Withington, we are committed to ensuring that each individual pupil thrives and is able to meet their full potential both academically and personally. Pupil wellbeing is at the heart of school life. The expectation for children of compulsory school age is that they receive **an efficient, full-time education** suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have, which means that where parents decide to have their child registered at School, they have a legal responsibility and have contracted with the School to **ensure their child attends each School day**.

Occasionally, pupils have issues that make it difficult for them to attend school. These can include neurological conditions such as autism and ADHD, mental health conditions such as low mood or anxiety and physical health conditions such as migraine or fatigue or a combination of the above. The attendance ambition for pupils with complex barriers to attendance such as long term physical or mental health conditions or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) should be the same as it is for any other pupil, with additional targeted support put in place to enable this.

Our Persistent Absence guidance applies as soon as an issue is identified as set out below.

Issue identified

When a pupil's attendance **drops below 90% during any term for** reasons that cannot be explained by a single episode of illness or exceptional circumstance or there is an **extended period of absence** (5 or more days) that cannot be explained by a single episode of illness from which the pupil should recover quickly, a Team around the Child (TAC) will be formed at School and they will work with parents and the pupil to understand the barriers to attendance and work together to facilitate a return to full attendance and re-engagement with school. The TAC will typically consist of staff from Learning Support, Health and Pastoral teams and will meet every 4 – 6 weeks or as otherwise convened to best support a pupil's return to full attendance. The team will share the draft Individual Plan with the pupil and parents, agree which level currently applies to the pupil and agree a proposed time scale for movement to the identified level. The TAC will be chaired by a member of SLT who will have overall responsibility for ensuring these guidelines are followed.

Level 1 – Full time attendance, full timetable, with reasonable adjustments or adaptations to support

When a pupil is identified as having barriers to attendance where attendance drops below 90% during any term as identified above, an Individual Plan will be put in place in collaboration with and with the discussion and agreement of the pupil, parents and the School. This will include the reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities or other adaptations that everyone has agreed will help maximise attendance such as regular meetings with key staff, use of sensory area, seating plans, assistance over lunch time and so on. The pupil's perspective will be sought and recorded at each review meeting. These reasonable adjustments or adaptations will be reviewed regularly and updated as the TAC gathers more information about the pupil's needs and what reasonable adjustments or adaptations work most effectively. If attendance improves to 90%+, the TAC, pupil and family can either close the Individual Plan, if they agree the short-term interventions have been successful and are no longer needed; or keep it open on the agreement that the reasonable adjustments or adaptations need to remain in place to meet the child's needs. The TAC will have full and final discretion on whether an Individual Plan is to remain in place and its terms where there is any disagreement between the TAC and the pupil and/or parents.

Level 2 – Full time attendance, reduced timetable, reasonable adjustments or adaptations to support

If the Level 1 interventions above have not led to an improvement in attendance at or above 90% after an initial period (normally around 8 term time weeks), full time attendance but with a timetable reduction will be implemented to reduce cognitive load during the pupil's week and ensure some time can be spent in the Learning Support department or resting in the health centre if there is a physical health need. At Key Stage 3, this may involve the removal of one, two or more subjects that the pupil does not plan to study at GCSE, where this information is known to the School. At Key Stage 4, this may involve the removal of some GCSEs from a pupil's timetable, usually starting with option subjects and moving on, if needed, to dropping core subjects. At Key Stage 5, this may involve the removal of one or more A level subjects and/or EPQ. In all circumstances, removal of subjects from a pupil's timetable may be temporary depending on the individual circumstances, including the pupil's overall educational profile and the nature of the subject and stage of education. A return to a full or fuller timetable may be possible where the attendance intervention moves to Level 1.

Sometimes pupils feel anxious about a reduction to their timetable as they worry about not being seen to be as 'able' as their peer group or how this will be viewed by employers or universities in the future. We will always address these issues with the pupil and her family in depth, but Withington

policy is to aim for full-time attendance while managing a smaller number of subjects rather than attempting to continue with a full-time timetable if there is associated persistent absence. By ensuring full time attendance as quickly as possible, the risks to pupils who are persistently absent- including lower attainment and extra-familial harm – are reduced.

If attendance improves to 90%+, the TAC, pupil and family can either close the Individual Plan, if they agree the interventions at this level 2 have been successful and are no longer needed; or keep it open at this level 2 on the agreement that the reasonable adjustments or adaptations need to remain in place to meet the pupil's needs; or the pupil may move to level 1. The TAC will have full and final discretion on whether an Individual Plan is to remain in place and its terms where there is any disagreement between the TAC and the pupil and/or parents.

Level 3 – Part-time Attendance Plan, reduced timetable, reasonable adjustments or adaptations to support

In very exceptional circumstances, a Part-time Attendance Plan may be one of several strategies that we might implement to support a pupil whose attendance remains below 90% and where the TAC resolve that there is a need to escalate to this Level 3 further to the implementation of Level 1 and Level 2. In line with statutory guidance, *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*, the Part-time Attendance Plan will:

- Have the agreement of both the School and the parent the pupil normally lives with;
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan;
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place **for the shortest time necessary**; and
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. If a pupil is still managing a long-term health condition after the proposed end date, she may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period but we would recommend returning to school full time but on a reduced timetable where possible– see Level 2 above.

As part of the regular review process, the TAC will consider whether the measures implemented at level 3 are improving attendance. If the pupil is still persistently absent at times other than those agreed within the Part-time Attendance Plan a further period of support may be agreed after which we would either remain at this level 3, look to move to level 2 (full time attendance with a reduced timetable) or move to level 4 (longer term solutions). If the Part-time Attendance Plan has been followed effectively, we would look to increase the amount of time a pupil is spending in school in order to move to level 2 in the shortest time possible.

While there is some flexibility around extension of a Part-time Attendance Plan at this level 3, parents should be aware that the progression into the following year of education (and in the case of pupils in Year 11 and 13, entry to public examinations) is contingent on staff being able to evidence that sufficient learning has taken place. In such circumstances, the School shall consult with parents first and the pupil where she is of sufficient maturity and understanding. Please see the parent contract terms and conditions for further details in this regard. Pupils who have extended periods of time at Level 3 will usually have missed significant amounts of teaching and / or assessment and are unlikely to thrive academically or personally if they progress without these foundations in place. Consideration of progression to the next year group will be included in all Level 3 review meetings and if School do not support progression to the next stage, this will be flagged as early as possible to the parents with a clear plan to support the pupil in place.

For this level 3 intervention, we would usually expect time spent away from School to be dedicated to rest, recovery and/or therapeutic intervention, and the School will follow the non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education, *Providing remote education: guidance for schools* where some work may be set for the pupil to complete but the School does not offer online 'live' lessons, recorded lessons conducted by the School or other tuition whilst the pupils is not attending School. This will be discussed in advance and agreed by the TAC, the pupil and her family.

Occasionally, parents request that their child be allowed to attend 'part time' and spend time when not in school 'working from home'. Parents will sometimes request this as a kind of 'hybrid' arrangement, similar to what they may have experienced in the workplace and may take the view that this is a sensible and long-term solution for a pupil who has difficulties with in-person education. However, national statutory guidance is clear that any part time timetables should be in place for the shortest time necessary and we will always prioritise attending school even for one or two subjects over spending time at home to ensure that we meet the statutory expectation that children of compulsory school age receive an efficient, full-time education.

Level 4 - Longer-term solutions

Very occasionally, a pupil may find full time attendance at mainstream school does not meet their needs and, despite parents and school working closely together, the pupil has not returned to School full time and alternative solutions therefore need to be considered. These include:

- Prolonged Part-time Attendance Plan in accordance with level 3, but with plans to re-sit the academic year and/or not sit some / all public examinations; or
- Dual registration with a hospital school or similar; or
- Transfer to an online school; or
- Transfer to a differently paced academic environment; or
- Agree an EOTIAS (education otherwise than in a school) package with the local authority

We would normally start discussing these options with families when the approaches above at level 1, level 2 and level 3, along with any other reasonable adjustments and agreed therapies from external professionals have not been successful and the pupil has not returned to full time attendance and is achieving 90%+ attendance after a period of time (normally around 1 full term dated from the start of the first implementation of the Part-time Attendance Plan).

Please refer to the School's parent contract terms and conditions in respect of termination rights and responsibilities of the parents and the School and the right of the School to decline to enter a pupil for a public examination.

Beyond 15 days of absence

When a pupil has been absent due to illness for 15 or more days in the academic year, we will refer to the attendance team of the local authority and may also suggest an Early Help Assessment.

We will work with the family and medical team around the child to either implement a phased return (Level 3 moving to Level 2 as soon as possible) or consider Level 4 arrangements.

Fee Implications

Full fees remain payable during periods of absence in accordance with the parent contract terms and conditions. This reflects the School's ongoing commitment to provide education, pastoral support, and access to learning resources throughout a pupil's time away from school. Even when attendance is disrupted, the School continues to plan for, monitor, and support each pupil's

academic progress and wellbeing, ensuring continuity of provision in line with our educational and pastoral responsibilities.