



Absence, Attendance and Registration Procedure

Policy Title:	Absence, Attendance and Registration Procedure	Effective Date:	September 2026
Staff Member Responsible:	Deputy Head Pastoral / Senior Attendance Champion	Review Date:	September 2027

Westonbirt Senior School (including Boarding)

Policy Review and Revision Record

This record summarises the principal changes made for September 2026. It is intended to provide a clear audit trail for leadership, proprietor oversight and inspection.

Area reviewed	September 2026 update	Reason / reference	Status
Statutory framework	Updated to Working Together to Improve School Attendance (updated July 2026), KCSIE 2026 and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.	Current statutory framework for independent schools in England.	Updated
Compulsory school age	Corrected the previous statement that compulsory school age lasts until age 18.	Compulsory school age normally ends on the last Friday in June in the school year in which a child turns 16; participation requirements after 16 are separate.	Corrected
Attendance leadership	Senior Attendance Champion assigned to a senior leader; operational attendance administration separated from strategic leadership.	DfE statutory guidance expects a senior leader to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.	Strengthened
Registers and codes	Corrected the regulations from '2025' to the 2024 Regulations; retained the national attendance-code framework and clarified electronic register requirements.	2024 Regulations came into force on 19 August 2024.	Corrected
Safeguarding	Strengthened first-day response, repeated/prolonged absence, children missing education and escalation to the DSL/local authority.	KCSIE 2026 treats repeated/prolonged absence as a potential safeguarding warning sign.	Strengthened
Persistent/severe absence	Added national definitions: persistent absence = 10% or more sessions missed; severe absence = 50% or more.	DfE attendance definitions and inspection evidence base.	Added
Support-first approach	Reframed intervention around understanding barriers, reasonable adjustments, attendance plans/contracts and multi-agency support before legal intervention where appropriate.	Working Together to Improve School Attendance.	Strengthened
Penalty notices/legal intervention	Removed outdated fixed statements on fines/imprisonment and replaced them with current National Framework language, including the 10-session/10-school-week threshold for consideration.	Avoids embedding changeable penalty amounts and reflects current statutory guidance.	Updated
Data and inspection	Added termly cohort analysis, vulnerable-group monitoring and proprietor reporting.	2026 inspection evidence base expects leaders to analyse attendance closely and act on patterns.	Added
Boarding	Retained signing in/out and whereabouts expectations and linked them explicitly to safeguarding and the Boarding NMS.	Boarding safeguarding and welfare expectations.	Strengthened

Area reviewed	September 2026 update	Reason / reference	Status
Named individuals	Replaced personal names with role titles to keep the procedure current through staffing changes.	Policy resilience and governance clarity.	Updated

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1. Aims

1.1 Westonbirt School believes that pupils benefit most fully from the educational, pastoral and co-curricular opportunities provided by the School when attendance and punctuality are consistently high. Poor attendance can adversely affect attainment, wellbeing, relationships, personal development and a pupil's sense of belonging.

1.2 A child being absent from education, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, may also be a safeguarding and welfare concern and can be a warning sign of abuse, neglect, exploitation or other risk.

1.3 The aims of this procedure are to:

- provide a clear and consistent framework for attendance, absence, punctuality and registration;
- promote a culture in which high attendance is expected, recognised and supported;
- identify emerging attendance concerns early and understand the barriers affecting individual pupils;
- ensure that reasonable adjustments and appropriate support are considered for pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical needs or other vulnerabilities;
- ensure accurate statutory attendance and admission records are maintained;
- ensure unexplained, repeated or prolonged absence is responded to promptly as a safeguarding matter where appropriate; and
- work constructively with Parents, pupils, the local authority and other agencies to improve attendance.

2. Scope and application

2.1 This procedure applies to all pupils at Westonbirt School, including day pupils and boarders, and should be read alongside the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Missing Pupil Procedure, Behaviour and Discipline Policy, SEND Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions arrangements and Boarding policies.

2.2 The detailed operational steps for taking registers, correcting marks and using iSAMS are contained in the School's Registration Manual. Where there is any inconsistency, statutory requirements and this procedure take precedence.

3. Regulatory framework

3.1 This procedure has been prepared with regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance, as applicable to an independent school in England:

- Education Act 1996, including parental duties in relation to education and school attendance;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance - statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (updated July 2026);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for local authorities and relevant school duties;
- Equality Act 2010;
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years; and
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, as currently in force.

3.2 The School will keep this procedure under review and update operational practice where statutory attendance codes, registration requirements or safeguarding guidance change.

4. Definitions

Term	Meaning
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Term	Meaning
Attendance	A pupil's presence at the School for a statutory morning or afternoon session, or attendance at an approved educational activity recorded in accordance with the statutory code framework.
Authorised absence	Absence which the School is permitted to authorise under the applicable statutory framework.
Unauthorised absence	Absence which is not authorised by the School or for which no satisfactory reason has been established.
Persistent absence	Absence amounting to 10% or more of a pupil's possible sessions.
Severe absence	Absence amounting to 50% or more of a pupil's possible sessions.
Senior Attendance Champion	The senior leader with overall strategic responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
Parents	Parents, persons with parental responsibility, legal guardians and, where appropriate, education guardians .
Working day	Monday to Friday when the School is open during term time, unless the context requires otherwise.

5. Leadership and responsibilities

5.1 The Head has overall responsibility for ensuring that the School meets its legal and regulatory responsibilities for attendance and registration.

5.2 The Deputy Head Pastoral is the School's Senior Attendance Champion and has strategic responsibility for attendance. Day-to-day attendance administration may be delegated to the Pastoral Administrator / Attendance Officer, but strategic accountability remains with the Senior Attendance Champion.

Role	Core responsibility
Senior Attendance Champion	Sets the attendance strategy; monitors whole-school and cohort data; ensures early intervention; oversees persistent and severe absence; liaises with the Head, DSL and local authority; reports patterns and actions to senior leadership and the Proprietor.
Pastoral Administrator / Attendance Officer	Maintains day-to-day attendance processes; follows up unexplained absence; supports accurate coding; prepares data and reports; liaises with pastoral staff and Parents.
Tutors / Heads of Year / House staff	Promote attendance and punctuality; notice patterns; speak with pupils and Parents; contribute to attendance plans; escalate concerns.

Role	Core responsibility
DSL / Deputy DSL	Assesses safeguarding concerns arising from absence and coordinates safeguarding referrals or multi-agency action where required.
Teaching staff	Take accurate registers promptly; record lesson attendance; report unexpected absence from lessons or activities immediately.

6. Attendance expectations

6.1 Westonbirt sets high expectations for attendance and punctuality. As a School expectation, 96% attendance or above is regarded as a strong level of attendance for most pupils. This is a School benchmark, not a statutory threshold, and individual circumstances will always be considered.

6.2 Pupils are required to be in School in time for morning registration. The morning registration window is 08:15 to 08:20. The afternoon registration window is 13:45 to 14:15. Day pupils should not normally be dropped off before 07:45. The formal School day ends at 17:30; school transport normally departs shortly afterwards. Some co-curricular commitments may finish later.

6.3 Registers are taken formally twice each day, at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session. Lesson attendance is also recorded throughout the day.

6.4 The School will distinguish between occasional absence, emerging concern, persistent absence and severe absence. Intervention will be proportionate to the pattern, cause, vulnerability and impact of absence rather than relying on a percentage alone.

7. Responsibilities of Parents

7.1 Parents of children of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

7.2 Compulsory school age does not continue until age 18. It normally ends on the last Friday in June in the school year in which the child turns 16. Separate participation requirements apply to young people after compulsory school age. Parents must work with the school to:

- ensure their child attends punctually on every day the School is open unless absence is unavoidable or authorised;
- notify the School as early as possible and, for unexpected absence, by 8.00 am on each day of absence, using My School Portal or the published School contact route;
- provide the reason for absence and any information reasonably requested by the School to support accurate coding and safeguarding;
- request leave of absence in advance using the School's published process; leave is not an entitlement and will only be authorised where the School considers that the applicable criteria are met;
- avoid arranging routine medical or dental appointments during the School day wherever reasonably possible;
- ensure the School holds current contact details and, where Parents are away overnight during term, provide the required temporary guardian details;
- work with the School where attendance concerns emerge and engage with agreed support, meetings and attendance plans.

7.3 Requests for early departure or late arrival at the beginning or end of term for holidays or flights will not normally be authorised. Term dates are published well in advance.

7.4 Where a pupil is collected early unexpectedly, Parents must inform Reception / the School Office as soon as possible and the pupil must complete the School's signing-out process before leaving the site.

7.5 Parents can access regular information about their child's attendance through My School Portal. Where attendance or punctuality becomes a concern, the School will communicate directly with Parents about the pattern of absence or lateness, its potential impact on learning and wellbeing, and any support or action required.

8. Responsibilities of pupils

8.1 All pupils are expected to:

- attend School and all timetabled lessons, activities and registrations punctually;
- follow the School's signing-in and signing-out procedures;
- not leave the School site during the School day without permission;
- tell a trusted adult if there is a barrier making attendance difficult;
- co-operate with attendance support plans and reasonable pastoral interventions.

8.2 Unauthorised absence from School or lessons, persistent lateness, or leaving site without permission may constitute a breach of the Behaviour and Discipline Policy. Any disciplinary response will be proportionate and will not replace appropriate support or safeguarding action.

8.3 Sixth Form pupils may leave site only in accordance with published Sixth Form arrangements, including any authorised driving-lesson procedure, and must sign out and back in as required.

9. Responsibilities of the School

9.1 The School will maintain an electronic admission register and attendance register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

- take the attendance register at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session;
- use the statutory attendance and absence codes and record the reason for absence accurately;
- follow up unexplained absence promptly and continue to make reasonable enquiries until the pupil's whereabouts and safety are established;
- identify patterns of absence and lateness early, including patterns affecting particular days, lessons, groups or cohorts;
- work with pupils and Parents to understand and remove barriers to attendance;
- make timely and appropriate reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND or disabilities and consider medical, mental health, caring and safeguarding circumstances;
- work with the local authority and other services where additional or formal support is required;
- retain attendance and admission register entries for the statutory retention period; and
- ensure attendance information is available for inspection and lawful local-authority access.

9.2 Independent schools are not currently required to submit daily attendance data to the Department for Education in the same way as state-funded schools, although the School will comply with any applicable statutory data-sharing requirements and may participate in appropriate data-sharing arrangements.

10. Registration and attendance coding

10.1 A pupil must not be marked present for a statutory session unless physically present at the School at the point of registration, except where the statutory code framework provides for an approved educational activity.

10.2 Where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity away from the School, the School must be satisfied that the activity and supervision meet the applicable statutory requirements before the relevant code is used.

10.3 Where the reason for absence is not known when the register is taken, the appropriate temporary code will be used and amended promptly when the reason is established.

10.4 Staff responsible for trips, fixtures, appointments or other authorised activities must notify attendance staff in advance and must alert them immediately if a pupil expected at the activity does not arrive.

10.5 The current code table is reproduced at Appendix 2 for operational convenience. If the DfE code framework changes, the statutory framework takes precedence over the appendix until the procedure is formally updated.

11. Absence and leave of absence

11.1 The School will authorise absence only where it is satisfied that the circumstances meet the applicable statutory or permitted grounds. Each request will be considered on its individual facts.

11.2 Medical and dental appointments should, where reasonably possible, be arranged outside School hours. Where this is not possible, only the necessary period of absence should normally be requested.

11.3 Religious observance, regulated performances, interviews, temporary part-time timetables and other circumstances will be coded in accordance with the statutory code framework and any required conditions.

11.4 A temporary part-time timetable will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for the shortest necessary period, with clear review arrangements, safeguarding oversight, parental agreement and a plan to return to full-time education. It will not be used as a behaviour-management device.

11.5 Family holidays during term time will not be authorised as holiday. Any absence will be considered and coded in accordance with the statutory framework.

12. Supporting attendance and reducing absence

12.1 The School adopts a support-first approach. Attendance concerns should prompt curiosity about the cause of absence and action to remove barriers, while maintaining high expectations.

12.2 The School's staged response is set out in Appendix 1. It may include informal contact, pupil discussion, attendance monitoring, a meeting with Parents, an Attendance Action Plan or attendance contract, reasonable adjustments, pastoral/SEND/medical support and liaison with external agencies.

12.3 Persistent absence means 10% or more of possible sessions missed. Severe absence means 50% or more. Pupils approaching either threshold will be prioritised for intervention; the School will not wait for a threshold to be crossed where concerns are already evident.

12.4 The School will pay particular attention to attendance of pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical needs, pupils known or previously known to children's social care, young carers, pupils experiencing mental-health or family difficulties, and any other group whose attendance data indicates a disparity.

12.5 Attendance incentives will focus on belonging, engagement, improvement and positive recognition. The School will avoid approaches that stigmatise pupils whose absence is linked to disability, medical need or circumstances beyond their control.

13. Safeguarding and children absent from education

13.1 Repeated or prolonged absence, unexplained absence and unexpected absence from lessons or activities may be a safeguarding warning sign. Staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and refer concerns to the DSL without delay.

13.2 On the first day of unexplained absence, the School will use the contact information held for the pupil and make proportionate enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts and welfare. Where contact cannot be established, or the circumstances cause concern, the matter will be escalated promptly.

13.3 The School will inform and work with the local authority and/or Children's Social Care where required, including where a pupil may be a child missing education or where statutory notification requirements relating to admission-register deletion apply.

13.4 The School will make the required local-authority notification where a pupil of compulsory school age has been absent without authorisation for 10 continuous school days, in accordance with the Wishford Education Attendance Policy and applicable statutory requirements.

13.5 The School will make the required sickness return to the local authority where it has reasonable grounds to believe that a pupil of compulsory school age, recorded as absent through illness, will miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

13.6 Where a pupil has a social worker or youth justice worker, unexplained absence will be shared with that professional where required or appropriate.

13.7 The School's Missing Pupil Procedure applies where a pupil cannot be located during the School day or, for a boarder, where their whereabouts are unknown.

14. Boarders

14.1 Boarding staff must know the whereabouts of boarders in their charge, or know how to establish their whereabouts, in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and the School's boarding procedures.

14.2 Boarders must use the School's signing-out and signing-in arrangements whenever they leave or return to the School site outside formal teaching hours. House staff will maintain appropriate roll calls and supervision.

14.3 Parents / guardians must provide accurate travel and return information. Where a boarder does not return at the expected time, House staff will follow the School's missing-boarder and safeguarding procedures and contact Parents / guardians and, where necessary, external agencies.

14.4 The School expects boarders to arrive punctually at the beginning of term and return from authorised leave at the agreed time. Travel arrangements should be planned around published term dates wherever reasonably possible.

15. Legal intervention and local authority liaison

15.1 The School will work with Gloucestershire County Council and, where relevant, another pupil's home local authority to secure appropriate support and fulfil statutory notification duties.

15.2 Legal intervention is not the first response where support is appropriate and likely to be effective. Where voluntary support has not worked, has not been engaged with, or is not appropriate, the School may work with the local authority in relation to formal attendance support or legal intervention.

15.3 Under the National Framework for Penalty Notices, 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks is the national threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered. Reaching the threshold does not mean a penalty notice will automatically be issued; the circumstances, support offered and the local authority's statutory role must be considered.

15.4 The School will not embed penalty amounts or prosecution penalties in this procedure because these can change. Current statutory guidance and the local authority's published arrangements will be followed.

16. Data, monitoring and reporting

16.1 The Senior Attendance Champion will review attendance information regularly at whole-School, year-group, house and individual-pupil level, and for relevant pupil groups, to identify patterns, disparities and emerging concerns.

16.2 Attendance data will be used to evaluate the impact of interventions, identify pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence, and determine where additional pastoral, SEND, safeguarding or external support is required.

16.3 The Senior Attendance Champion will maintain a Westonbirt School Attendance Improvement Plan. This will be formally reviewed at least termly against the responsibilities and priorities identified in the Wishford Education Attendance Policy. The review will evaluate attendance data, the impact of actions taken, priorities for the following period and, where appropriate, the views of pupils, Parents and staff. Significant trends and the effectiveness of the attendance strategy will be reported to the Head and Proprietor.

16.4 Attendance information will be interpreted carefully. Percentages will not be considered in isolation from the pupil's circumstances, reasons for absence and safeguarding context.

17. Training

17.1 Staff receive appropriate attendance and registration guidance on induction and at intervals thereafter. Training is proportionate to role and includes accurate register completion, statutory codes, first-day response, safeguarding escalation and the School's support procedures.

17.2 Staff with specific attendance responsibilities will be kept up to date with changes to DfE guidance, local-authority arrangements and the School's Absence, Attendance and Registration procedures document.

18. Record keeping

18.1 Attendance and admission registers, attendance-support records, meeting notes, correspondence and safeguarding records will be managed in accordance with statutory retention requirements, the School's Data Protection Policy and records-retention arrangements.

18.2 Attendance and admission register entries will be preserved for six years from the date on which the entry was made, in accordance with the current statutory framework.

18.3 Records should provide a clear chronology of concerns, communication, support offered, reasonable adjustments considered, decisions made, referrals and outcomes.

Appendix 1 - Attendance intervention framework

The following framework guides professional judgement. It is not an automatic sanction ladder and does not replace safeguarding action or reasonable adjustments.

Attendance picture	Indicative response	Typical actions	Escalation / review
96-100%	Good / excellent	Positive recognition; maintain routines; address isolated lateness promptly.	Routine monitoring.
93-95.9%	Emerging concern	Analyse reasons and patterns; tutor / pastoral conversation; contact Parents where appropriate.	Short review period; consider evidence/support needs.
90-92.9%	Significant concern	Formal attendance meeting; identify barriers; Attendance Action Plan; consider SEND/medical/safeguarding input.	Review normally within 3-4 weeks; liaise with LA where appropriate.
Below 90%	Persistent absence	Priority case management; regular review; formalised support; multi-agency liaison where needed.	Senior Attendance Champion oversight; consider formal attendance support/legal framework if appropriate.
50% or more sessions missed	Severe absence	Intensive, individualised and often multi-agency support; safeguarding review; clear reintegration/education plan.	Frequent senior review with LA and other agencies as appropriate.

Appendix 2 - National attendance and absence codes

The table below reflects the statutory code framework introduced from 19 August 2024 and used operationally by the School. Staff must use the current DfE framework and iSAMS configuration where these are updated.

Code	Description	Use / explanation
/	Present (AM)	Present for the morning session.
\	Present (PM)	Present for the afternoon session.
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Approved educational activity; not applicable to virtual learning merely because work is provided remotely.
C	Leave of absence - exceptional circumstances	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.
C1	Leave of absence - regulated performance/employment abroad	Participation in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence - temporary part-time timetable	Compulsory-school-age pupil subject to an agreed temporary part-time timetable.
D	Dual registered	Attending another school where dual registration applies.
E	Suspended or permanently excluded without alternative provision	Suspended/permanently excluded and no alternative provision is being attended for the session.
G	Holiday not granted	Unauthorised absence for a holiday not granted by the School, or excess days beyond leave granted.
I	Illness	Illness, excluding medical/dental appointment.
J1	Interview	Leave to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.
K	Education provision arranged by the local authority	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority.
L	Late before register closes	Late arrival before the register closes.
M	Medical or dental appointment	Leave for a medical or dental appointment.
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Temporary code while the reason is being established.
O	Other unauthorised absence	Absence in other or unknown circumstances where no authorised reason applies.
P	Sporting activity	Participating in an approved sporting activity.
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements.
R	Religious observance	Absence for religious observance within the statutory conditions.
S	Study leave	Study leave for a public examination where applicable.
T	Travelling with parent for occupational purposes	Travelling for the occupational purposes of a parent within the statutory conditions.
U	Late after register closes	Late arrival after the register has closed.
V	Educational visit or trip	Attending an educational visit or trip.
W	Work experience	Attending work experience.
X	Non-compulsory-school-age pupil not required to attend	Not required to attend the session under the statutory framework.
Y1	Transport not available	Unable to attend because transport normally provided is unavailable.
Y2	Widespread travel disruption	Unable to attend because of widespread travel disruption.
Y3	Unavoidable partial closure	Unable to attend because part of the School premises is unexpectedly closed.
Y4	Unavoidable full closure	Unable to attend because the whole School site is unexpectedly closed.
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Unable to attend because the pupil is in criminal justice detention.
Y6	Public health guidance/law	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law.
Y7	Other unavoidable cause	Unable to attend because of another unavoidable cause not covered by Y1-Y6.
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil not yet on the admission register.
#	Planned whole-school closure	Planned closure for all pupils.

Policy administration

Author / policy lead	Deputy Head Pastoral
Approval / sign-off	Head / Proprietor as applicable
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