Wellington Primary School

Drafted by K Kahlon
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WELLINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance, Punctuality and Absence Policy

Policy control
School: Wellington Primary School, Sutton Lane, Hounslow, TW3 4LB
Headteacher: Mrs Debbie Norton
Senior Attendance Champion: Ms K. Kahlon
School office: 020 8570 6130 | office@wellington.hounslow.sch.uk
School attendance ambition: 96% or above, while recognising individual circumstances and barriers.

This policy has been updated to reflect the Department for Education statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026), the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, Children missing education statutory guidance (September 2025), and the London Borough of Hounslow Local Code of Conduct for penalty notices.

Contents

1. Aims and statutory framework
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Attendance and punctuality expectations
4. Attendance and admission registers
5. Reporting and following up absence
6. Authorised absence, illness and medical appointments
7. Leave of absence and term-time holidays
8. Punctuality and lateness
9. Attendance support, persistent and severe absence
10. Pupils with additional barriers to attendance
11. Part-time timetables and remote education
12. Children Missing Education and deletion from roll
13. Legal intervention and penalty notices
14. Monitoring, data and promoting attendance
15. Staff development and governor oversight
16. Links, publication and review
Appendix 1 - Attendance intervention pathway
Appendix 2 - Rights Respecting links
Appendix 3 - Daily absence and safeguarding protocol
Appendix 4 - National attendance codes (summary)
Appendix 5 - Example attendance communications
Appendix 6 - Attendance support plan

1. Aims and statutory framework

Wellington Primary School recognises that regular and punctual attendance is essential to pupils' achievement, safeguarding, wellbeing, friendships and wider development. Attendance is a shared responsibility across pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors, the local authority and other partners.

The school takes a support-first approach. We seek to understand barriers to attendance, remove barriers within school, help families access wider support and act early before absence becomes entrenched. Where support is not appropriate, is unsuccessful or is not engaged with, the school will work with Hounslow School Attendance Support Service (SASS) to use formal or legal interventions where necessary.

This policy is informed by:

- Education Act 1996, including parents' duties in relation to school attendance.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- DfE statutory guidance: Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026).
- DfE statutory guidance: Children missing education (September 2025).
- DfE statutory safeguarding guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- London Borough of Hounslow Local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices.

Our Rights Respecting approach reflects the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Articles 3, 12, 28, 29 and 31. Attendance expectations are applied fairly and consistently while taking account of individual circumstances and the best interests of the child.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Governing Body

- Promote the importance of attendance across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure leaders fulfil statutory attendance duties and maintain a policy consistent with current guidance.
- Review attendance and punctuality data regularly, including trends over time and the attendance of vulnerable pupil groups.
- Provide support and challenge to leaders on persistent and severe absence and the impact of attendance strategies.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate attendance training and that attendance is considered alongside safeguarding, SEND, medical needs, behaviour, wellbeing and disadvantage.

2.2 Headteacher and Senior Attendance Champion

- The Headteacher retains overall accountability for the implementation of this policy.
- Ms K. Kahlon is the Senior Attendance Champion and leads the school's strategic work on attendance and punctuality.
- The Senior Attendance Champion monitors data, evaluates interventions, ensures consistent procedures, liaises with families and external agencies, and reports to senior leaders and governors.
- Parents may contact the Senior Attendance Champion through the school office on 020 8570 6130 or office@wellington.hounslow.sch.uk.

2.3 School staff

- Take registers accurately and follow up concerns promptly.
- Promote the benefits of good attendance and punctuality in a supportive, non-discriminatory way.

- Identify emerging patterns, listen to pupils and parents and share concerns with the attendance team or DSL as appropriate.
- Work with families to remove school-based barriers and implement agreed support or reasonable adjustments.

2.4 Parents and carers

- Ensure their child attends every session when required, arrives on time and is ready to learn.
- Notify the school on the first day of unexpected absence, giving the reason and likely return date.
- Keep the school informed during longer absences and maintain up-to-date contact details.
- Arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours where possible and return the child to school before or after appointments where appropriate.
- Request any leave of absence in advance and provide relevant information or evidence to support the request.
- Engage with school and other services where attendance support is offered.

2.5 Pupils

- Attend regularly and on time where they are of compulsory school age.
- Talk to a trusted adult if something is making attendance difficult.
- Engage with support plans and contribute their views to decisions affecting their attendance.

3. Attendance and punctuality expectations

Published school-day times are as follows:

Phase	Arrival / start	End of day	Notes
Morning Nursery	8:45am	11:45am	Nursery is below compulsory school age.
Afternoon Nursery	12:30pm	3:30pm	Nursery is below compulsory school age.
Reception	9:00am	3:15pm	Pupils should arrive in good time.
Years 1-2	9:00am	3:15pm	Pupils should arrive in good time.
Years 3-6	8:45-8:55am soft start	3:30pm	Pupils should be in class by 8:55am.

To meet the DfE expectation that the morning attendance register is taken consistently, the morning attendance register for Reception to Year 6 is taken at 9:00am and closes at 9:10am. Pupils arriving after the register is taken but before it closes are marked late (L); arrival after 9:10am is recorded using code U unless another code applies. Nursery registration arrangements are managed separately because nursery pupils are below compulsory school age.

Parents must collect pupils promptly at the published end of the day. Collection arrangements and permissions for independent travel are managed in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

4. Attendance and admission registers

The school keeps electronic admission and attendance registers. The attendance register is taken at the start of each morning session and once during the afternoon session. Where a pupil is not present, the appropriate national code is recorded in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

- Registers are legal records and entries are retained for 6 years from the date they are made.
- Any amendment must show the original entry, amended entry, reason, date of amendment and name of the person making it.
- The school shares attendance data with the DfE and local authority as required.
- The school maintains up-to-date admission register information and makes required returns to the local authority.

5. Reporting and following up absence

5.1 What parents must do

- Contact the school on the first day of an unexpected absence, preferably before 9:15am, by telephone or via the school's agreed communication route.
- Give the reason for absence and, where known, the expected date of return.
- Maintain contact during extended absence and provide updates if the expected return date changes.
- Ensure all telephone numbers, email addresses and emergency contacts held by the school are current.

5.2 What the school will do

- Check unexplained absences after registers are taken and cross-check that the pupil is not elsewhere on site or attending an approved activity.
- Begin first-day contact with parents/carers where no reason has been received, ordinarily by 9:30am.
- Use all available contacts and communication methods proportionately until the pupil's whereabouts and safety are established.
- Escalate promptly to the DSL and, where appropriate, undertake a home visit or contact other agencies. Safeguarding concerns will not wait for a fixed number of days before escalation.
- Continue appropriate daily follow-up until contact is established or responsibility is transferred to another agency.

6. Authorised absence, illness and medical appointments

The school will authorise absence only where the reason meets the relevant statutory attendance code or leave has been granted. Examples may include illness, necessary medical or dental appointments, religious observance, suspension, or exceptional circumstances where leave has been granted.

6.1 Illness and medical evidence

Parents should notify the school when a pupil is too ill to attend. The school does not routinely require medical evidence for every illness absence and will not operate a blanket rule requiring it. In most cases, a parent's notification can be accepted. Reasonable evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, or where illness is prolonged or repeatedly recurring and evidence

would help the school understand the pupil's needs, make reasonable adjustments or record absence accurately.

Where evidence is appropriate, the school will be flexible about its form and will avoid placing unnecessary pressure on health professionals. Evidence may include appointment information, prescriptions, medication information or relevant correspondence from health professionals.

6.2 Medical and dental appointments

Routine appointments should be arranged outside school hours wherever possible. Where an appointment during the school day is unavoidable, parents should provide appointment information where reasonably available and the pupil should attend school before and/or after the appointment where practicable.

6.3 Bereavement and other exceptional circumstances

Requests will be considered sensitively and individually. The school will not apply automatic blanket entitlements or fixed limits without considering the specific facts and circumstances of the family.

7. Leave of absence and term-time holidays

There is no automatic entitlement to leave during term time. A leave of absence for exceptional circumstances must be requested in advance by the parent with whom the pupil normally lives and will be considered individually by the Headteacher. If leave is granted, the Headteacher will determine its duration.

A need or desire for a holiday or other leisure/recreational absence is not generally considered an exceptional circumstance. Unauthorised term-time leave may contribute to the national threshold for considering a penalty notice.

- Parents should submit requests before making bookings and provide relevant supporting information.
- The school will consider the individual circumstances, relevant background context, previous patterns of absence and the pupil's attendance record.
- The school will not operate blanket policies that automatically authorise leave for a particular event or circumstance.
- Absence immediately before or after a holiday will be recorded according to the actual reason given and the appropriate national code; medical evidence will not be demanded automatically.

8. Punctuality and lateness

Punctuality supports a calm start to learning and prevents disruption. Late arrival is monitored and patterns are discussed with parents in a supportive way to understand and remove barriers.

- Arrival after the morning register is taken but before 9:10am is recorded as late (L).
- Arrival after 9:10am is recorded as U (late after the register has closed) unless another attendance code applies. Code U is an unauthorised absence for that session.
- Parents/carers bringing a pupil after the published start time should report to the school office so the pupil can be signed in safely.
- Persistent lateness may lead to an attendance meeting, support plan and, where unauthorised sessions accumulate, consideration of formal intervention in line with Hounslow's Local Code of Conduct.

9. Attendance support, persistent and severe absence

The school uses attendance data to identify emerging concerns early. We will listen to pupils and families, understand barriers, agree actions and review the impact of support. Intervention will be proportionate to need rather than based solely on a percentage threshold.

Persistent absence means a pupil misses 10% or more of possible school sessions. Severe absence means a pupil attends less than 50% of possible sessions. Severe absence is a safeguarding and welfare concern requiring intensified support and, where appropriate, multi-agency involvement.

- Early support may include parent meetings, pupil voice, mentoring, reasonable adjustments, pastoral support, SEND support, early help or referrals to external services.
- Where voluntary support is not effective or is not engaged with, support may be formalised through an attendance contract or education supervision order in partnership with the local authority.
- Where absence is severe or there are safeguarding concerns, the school will involve children's social care or other safeguarding partners as appropriate.
- Legal intervention is a last resort where support is not appropriate, has not worked or has not been engaged with.

10. Pupils with additional barriers to attendance

The same ambition for good attendance applies to all pupils, but some pupils require additional support or reasonable adjustments. The school will consider its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the individual circumstances of the pupil and family.

10.1 SEND, disability and physical or mental health

- Understand individual needs and work with the pupil and family to reduce barriers.
- Make reasonable adjustments and provide additional support where appropriate.
- For pupils with an EHC plan, liaise with the local authority when attendance falls or attendance barriers relate to identified needs.
- Work with health and other services where support beyond school is needed, while avoiding unnecessary medical-evidence requirements.

10.2 Pupils with a social worker or youth offending team worker

The school will inform the relevant worker of unexplained absence and involve them in attendance support where appropriate. Where deletion from roll is being considered, statutory information-sharing requirements will be followed.

10.3 Young carers

Where caring responsibilities contribute to absence, the school will work with the pupil and family and, where needed, Hounslow early help and other services. Young-carer information will be recorded as required for the school census.

11. Part-time timetables and remote education

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to full-time education. A temporary part-time timetable will only be used in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests and meets an identified individual need. It will never be used to manage behaviour.

- The parent with whom the pupil normally lives and the school must agree the arrangement.
- The timetable must form part of a clear support, health-care or reintegration plan.
- It must include regular review dates and an intended end date, and remain in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Where the pupil has a social worker, they will be kept informed and involved.
- Where the pupil has an EHC plan, the school will discuss the arrangement with the local authority.

- For a compulsory-school-age pupil, sessions not required under an agreed temporary part-time timetable will normally be recorded using code C2.

Remote education is not a routine substitute for attendance. Where used, it will be a last resort, time limited where appropriate, and part of a clear plan to support reintegration into face-to-face education.

12. Children Missing Education and deletion from roll

Children missing education (CME) can be a significant safeguarding concern. The school will follow the DfE Children missing education statutory guidance (September 2025) and Hounslow procedures, including prompt information sharing and reasonable enquiries where a pupil's whereabouts or education are not known.

- The school will notify the local authority where required, including when a pupil fails to attend on an agreed starting day and cannot be located.
- The school will use appropriate school-to-school and local authority systems to support identification and transfer of pupils.
- A pupil's name will only be deleted from the admission register where a lawful ground in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies and all required steps and notifications have been completed.
- There is no automatic removal from roll simply because a pupil has been absent for a particular number of days.

13. Legal intervention and penalty notices

Where attendance remains irregular, the school and Hounslow SASS will follow the support-first approach and the London Borough of Hounslow Local Code of Conduct. Legal intervention may include attendance contracts, education supervision orders, penalty notices or prosecution where the statutory tests are met.

13.1 National threshold for considering a penalty notice

All state-funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate when a pupil reaches 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions may be consecutive or non-consecutive and may span terms or school years. Relevant unauthorised codes include G, N, O and U.

Reaching the threshold does not mean a penalty notice is automatic. The school and local authority must consider the individual case, whether support is appropriate, whether it has been provided and engaged with, whether a penalty notice is likely to improve attendance, and Equality Act duties. In cases such as unauthorised holiday where support is not appropriate, referral for a penalty notice may be appropriate without a Notice to Improve.

13.2 Notice to Improve

Where support is appropriate but has not worked or has not been engaged with, a Notice to Improve will usually provide a final opportunity for improvement before a penalty notice. Hounslow's process and timescales will be followed; the statutory improvement period is between 3 and 6 weeks.

13.3 Penalty amounts and repeat offences

- First penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period: £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years: £160, payable within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within that 3-year period. Alternative legal action, often including prosecution, will be considered instead.

- Penalty notices in Hounslow are issued by the School Attendance Support Service following referral and checks in line with the Local Code of Conduct.

14. Monitoring, data and promoting attendance

Attendance and punctuality data is monitored daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annually at pupil, year-group and cohort level. Leaders use recent and historic trends and relevant benchmarking to target improvement and support.

- Governors receive regular attendance reports and scrutinise persistent and severe absence and relevant pupil groups, including SEND, pupils eligible for free school meals, young carers, pupils with social workers and pupils with long-term health conditions.
- Parents are kept informed about attendance expectations and concerns through direct communication, meetings, reports, newsletters and the school website.
- The school may praise good attendance, punctuality and improvement, but rewards will be used sensitively and without discrimination. Rewards will not disadvantage pupils whose attendance is affected by disability, medical needs or other circumstances beyond their control.
- The school's attendance ambition is 96% or above, but this is a school improvement ambition rather than a legal threshold and will never replace consideration of individual circumstances.

15. Staff development and governor oversight

- Attendance is included in staff induction and ongoing professional development.
- Staff with specific attendance responsibilities receive training on attendance law, register codes, data analysis, family support and safeguarding.
- Governors review attendance data, challenge trends, ensure the policy remains current and check that attendance improvement is appropriately resourced.

16. Links, publication and review

This policy is linked to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour and Relationships Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Equality and Inclusion Policy, SEND Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, Remote and Home Learning Policy and Complaints Policy.

The policy will be published on the school website, shared with families when pupils join the school, and drawn to parents' attention at the start of each academic year and whenever it is materially updated. It will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance or local procedures change. In reviewing the policy, the school will seek the views of pupils and parents where appropriate.

Key external references:

- DfE, Working together to improve school attendance, July 2026: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance
- DfE, Children missing education, September 2025: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/contents
- London Borough of Hounslow - School attendance and absence / Local Code of Conduct: https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/schools-colleges/school-attendance-absence

Appendix 1 - Attendance intervention pathway

The following pathway supports consistent early intervention. Percentages are prompts for review rather than automatic triggers for punitive action; individual circumstances and barriers must always be considered.

Stage	Action
Universal	Attendance promoted for all pupils. Class teachers and office staff notice emerging patterns, discuss concerns early and signpost support.
Early concern	Where attendance falls below the school ambition or a concerning pattern emerges, school contacts the family, listens to barriers and agrees support. A written summary may be sent.
Persistent absence / escalating concern	Where a pupil is at risk of or reaches persistent absence (10% or more sessions missed), a formal meeting and written attendance support plan may be used, with regular review.
Formal support	Where voluntary support is not effective or not engaged with, school works with SASS and partners to consider an attendance contract, Notice to Improve, education supervision order or other formal support.
Enforcement where necessary	Where support is not appropriate, has not worked or has not been engaged with, and legal tests are met, SASS may issue a penalty notice or consider prosecution. Severe absence or safeguarding concerns may require children's social care involvement.

Appendix 2 - Rights Respecting links

Article 3: The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in decisions affecting children.

Article 12: Children have the right to express their views in matters affecting them and to have those views taken seriously.

Article 28: Every child has the right to education.

Article 29: Education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

Article 31: Every child has the right to rest, play and participate in cultural and artistic life.

Appendix 3 - Daily absence and safeguarding protocol

1. After the morning register is taken, collate pupils absent without a known reason and cross-check the school site and approved off-site activities.
2. Check absence messages received by the office and update codes where the reason is established.
3. Contact parents/carers using the known contact list. Use telephone, text/email and other school-approved communication routes as appropriate.
4. When contact is made, record the reason and expected return date and decide whether any further support or safeguarding action is needed.
5. If contact is not made, continue to use available contacts and check school intelligence, including whether the pupil has a social worker, youth offending team worker or other agency support.
6. Discuss unresolved absence with a DSL. Where risk warrants it, carry out a prompt home visit and/or contact appropriate agencies. Do not wait for a fixed number of days if there is a safeguarding concern.
7. Where the child cannot be located or there are concerns they may be missing education, follow Hounslow CME procedures and make appropriate referrals to SASS, Children's Services/MASH and/or Police according to risk.
8. Continue follow-up and record all actions until the pupil's whereabouts and educational status are established.

Appendix 4 - National attendance codes (summary)

The full legal definitions are contained in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and DfE guidance. This summary is for operational reference only.

Code	Summary
/	Present - morning session
\	Present - afternoon session
L	Late before register closes
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Educational visit or trip
P	Approved sporting activity
W	Work experience
B	Other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school

Code	Summary
C1	Regulated performance / regulated employment abroad
M	Medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview
S	Study leave
X	Non-compulsory school-age pupil not required to attend
C2	Compulsory school-age pupil subject to an agreed temporary part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness
E	Suspended or excluded where no alternative provision is attended
Q	Lack of access arrangements
Y1	Transport not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Part of school premises closed
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed
Y5	Criminal justice detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law

Code	Summary
Y7	Other unavoidable cause
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived after the register closed
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole-school closure

Appendix 5 - Example attendance communications

A. Initial attendance concern

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing because we have noticed a pattern of absence and would like to work with you to support [child's name]'s attendance. Current attendance is [ ]%. Regular attendance helps pupils make progress, maintain friendships and benefit from the full range of school opportunities.

We understand that absence can have many causes. Please contact Ms K. Kahlon through the school office so that we can listen to any barriers affecting attendance and agree support. We will continue to monitor attendance and may invite you to a meeting if concerns continue or if attendance approaches the persistent-absence threshold.

Kind regards,
Mrs D. Norton
Headteacher

B. Punctuality concern

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing because [child's name] has arrived late on [ ] occasions. Arriving on time helps pupils settle calmly and prevents lost learning. We would like to understand whether there are any barriers making punctual arrival difficult and whether school can help.

Please contact the school office if you would like support. We will continue to monitor punctuality and will arrange a meeting if the pattern continues.

Kind regards,

Mrs D. Norton
Headteacher

Appendix 6 - Attendance support plan

Pupil name

Date of birth

Parent/carer

Date of meeting

Current attendance

Main barriers identified

Pupil views

Parent/carer views

School views

Action	Responsible	Timescale	Review date	Outcome

Review outcome: _____

Parent/carer signature: _____ Pupil: _____ School: _____