Attendance & Punctuality Policy
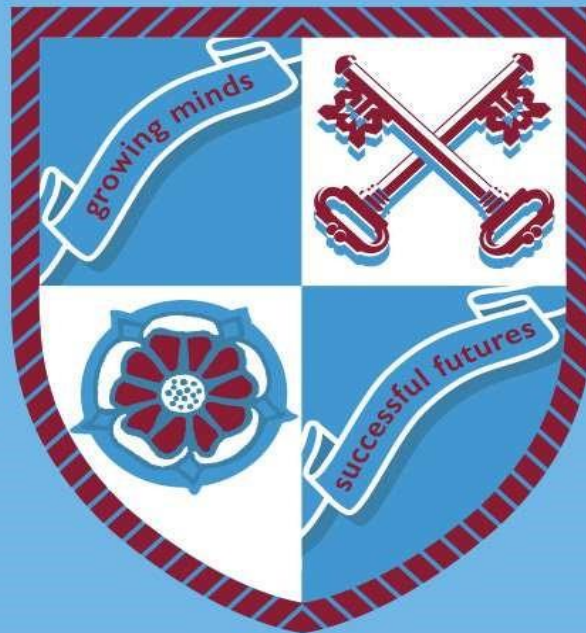
Approved by:	Full Governing Body	Date: 28 March 2023
Next review due by:	May 2024	

Introduction

The Staff and Governors at Warblington School are united in their belief that regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Helping them to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Warblington School values all students. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the barriers to achieving and maintaining excellent attendance and offer the right service at the right time to try to resolve any difficulties.

The Attendance Leader (Dr F Lansley AHT) and Attendance Officer (Mrs R Timson) will monitor attendance and use attendance data to identify any patterns of concern, whilst also celebrating success. Attendance concerns will be raised with parents/carers if reasons are not known by the school, e.g. a long period of illness. This information may be shared with the Local Authority following concerns in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice Where we have concerns, or lack of engagement from families to improve attendance, we will follow the schools escalated approach to improving attendance. The schools escalated approach is child-centred, prioritising support and developing strong working relationships with families. We will use the early help process to provide support prior to escalation and consider how we can work with families to enable all students to access their right to education.

Attendance figures for each student will be formally reported to parents as part of their termly report, but are available daily for students and parents/carers through Classcharts. We will also share a students' attendance profile if we have concerns regarding their attendance. Throughout the school year the Attendance Team will report on the overall attendance figures for particular groups of students, this will be closely monitored for support and reported to the Governing Body.

To support good attendance and safeguarding we:

- Ensure the school is welcoming and every student feels a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Ensure the school site is open at the stated times.
- Ensure the regular, efficient, and accurate recording of attendance is complete by every tutor and class teacher each day. This further supports our approach to safeguarding within the school.
- Take safeguarding seriously and always contact home on the first day that a student is absent from school. If a student arrives late (after the close of registration), we will record their arrival at reception and transition them to class.
- Consider any requests for leave during term time individually. This will be aligned to the Local Authority code of conduct.
- Notify the Local Authority within 5 days if a new student is joining the school roll.
- Inform the Local Authority of students whose parents/carers have notified the school in writing and have opted for Elective Home Education.
- Work closely with the local Legal Intervention Team

- Notify the Local Authority of Children Missing in Education – aligned to the DfE 2022 Attendance paper.

A whole school approach to supporting attendance at Warblington School

Securing good attendance at Warblington cannot be achieved in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve working closely with other Leaders within the school. The Attendance Leader will work alongside the Curriculum Leaders and the Inclusion Team to facilitate a whole school approach.

The Strategic Approach

Warblington School adopts the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework, this is modelled on the work of Professor Katherine Weare. ([Framework for Promoting Well-Being and Responding to Mental Health in Schools](#)) The emphasis is on developing a school culture and climate which builds a sense of connectedness and belonging to ensure all students can attend school and thrive. The approach ensures we prioritise building solid working relationships with students, and parents, prior to escalation. The staged approach we follow ensures we identify triggers early that can lead to poor attendance issues such as mental health issues, lack of trust, communication and relationship breakdowns and the possible lack of networking opportunities both internal (in-school) and external (external agencies).

Aims of the 5 Foundations strategy

- Increase school Attendance and reduce Persistent Absence to meet set targets.

- Ensure Attendance is well managed within the school, with the appropriate level of resources allocated.

- Enable the school to make informed use of attendance data to target interventions appropriately, focusing on the key demographic groups highlighted in the [2022 DfE School Attendance Guidance](#)

Objectives

- create an ethos within the school in which good attendance is recognised as the norm and every student aims for excellent attendance.

- make attendance and punctuality a priority.

- set focused targets to improve individual attendance and whole school attendance levels.

- embed the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality.

- record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism.

- develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing relevant attendance data.

- provide support, advice and guidance to; parents, carers and students and develop mutual co-operation between home and school in encouraging good attendance and in addressing identified attendance issues.

- Demonstrate, using praise and recognition, that the school appreciates that good attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves.

5 Foundations Of Effective Attendance Practice

5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice

The main aim of the framework is to ensure the school promotes a culture of good attendance and celebrates success.   Ultimately, the framework will ensure there is a culture of feeling safe and school being a place where students want to be.

Positive health and emotional well-being are key factors in improving social development, school attendance and educational achievement. The 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice model promotes, and supports, a whole school approach to mental health and emotional well-being; ensuring SEMH support remains a key driver in improving attendance for all students.

Each Foundation is supported by 5 Key Performance Indicators, these are used to ensure the school can embed the Foundations framework and understand the strategic direction regarding attendance improvement. Each year the school will use the 5 Foundations self-assessment tool to understand what works well and identify what we need to do even better. We then follow the 5 Foundations school improvement process to implement the attendance plan and ultimately improve the lives of the students and families we work with.

Foundation 1
Whole School Thinking
Culture & Climate

The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. The escalated approach to supporting attendance is built on foundations of belonging and connectedness.

**Foundation 2
Supportive Policies,
Systems and Processes**

The approach to improving attendance is built on clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy is understood by all stakeholders and allows the school to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.

**Foundation 3
Professional Learning
Staff Development**

The school prioritises developing a team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. The Attendance Leader delivers bespoke training to support all staff to fully understand their role in improving attendance. External partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified students and families.

**Foundation 4
Implement Targeted
Programmes And Intervention**

Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the Attendance Leader understands the reason for attendance concerns, these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed.

**Foundation 5
Connect Appropriately With
Approaches To
Behaviour Management**

Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The school has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success.

From September 2022 the DfE: Working Together to Improve Attendance paper replaced previous guidance on school attendance except for statutory guidance for parental responsibility measures. The Secretary of State has committed to it becoming statutory when parliamentary time allows (this will be no sooner than September 2023).

The table below identifies how the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice will underpin the DfE 2022 paper.

DFE Summary of Expectations	Foundation 1 Whole School Thinking Culture & Climate	Foundation 2 Supportive Policies, Systems and Processes	Foundation 3 Professional Learning Staff Development	Foundation 4 Implement Targeted Programmes And Intervention	Foundation 5 Connect Appropriately With Approaches To Behaviour Management
Develop a whole-school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Have a school attendance policy		✓			
Have day-to-day processes to follow up absence	✓	✓	✓		
Monitor and analyse data to identify those that need support		✓	✓	✓	
Engage with families, understand barriers to attendance and work together to remove them	✓			✓	✓
Provide additional support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND			✓	✓	✓
Share information and work collaboratively with others	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A new focus on persistent and severe absence		✓	✓	✓	✓
Find out what the DFE expects from other stakeholders		✓	✓	✓	

Warblington School will always work in partnership with our parents

Warblington School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a students' life and their lived experience. This may be related to problems at home or in school. Parents should inform the school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example; bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school to identify any additional early help that may be required. Safeguarding is a priority, concerns for any student at any time will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. We will always follow Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 and our own Safeguarding and Child Protection policies.

Some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, students who are vulnerable, have a medical need or EHCP plan. At Warblington School, we will proactively identify and follow up on a students' non-attendance and gather information about them. This will result in taking early action to prevent non-attendance developing and monitoring the impact of targeted support.

The Attendance Officer will initially:

- Check records, including any from other schools which the student has attended previously.
- Discuss with staff how the student is coping with the curriculum
- Liaise with the Inclusion Team to establish whether the student is on the SEND register or has any underlying vulnerabilities that need to be taken into account.
- Listen to the voice of the student and understand any difficulties, e.g. curriculum or bullying and their views on the issue could be addressed.

Students whose attendance falls below 90% are classified as Persistently Absent from school. Where a student falls under 50% attendance, they will be classified as Severely Absent. Where attendance remains a concern and all other interventions and support have not made a significant impact, we will escalate with external partners.

Attendance Support Map.

We will always support students during each stage of our Attendance Support Map. If there is lack of engagement, or concerns regarding the reason for absence, we will follow the Attendance Map to ensure we prioritise a students' learning and right to education.
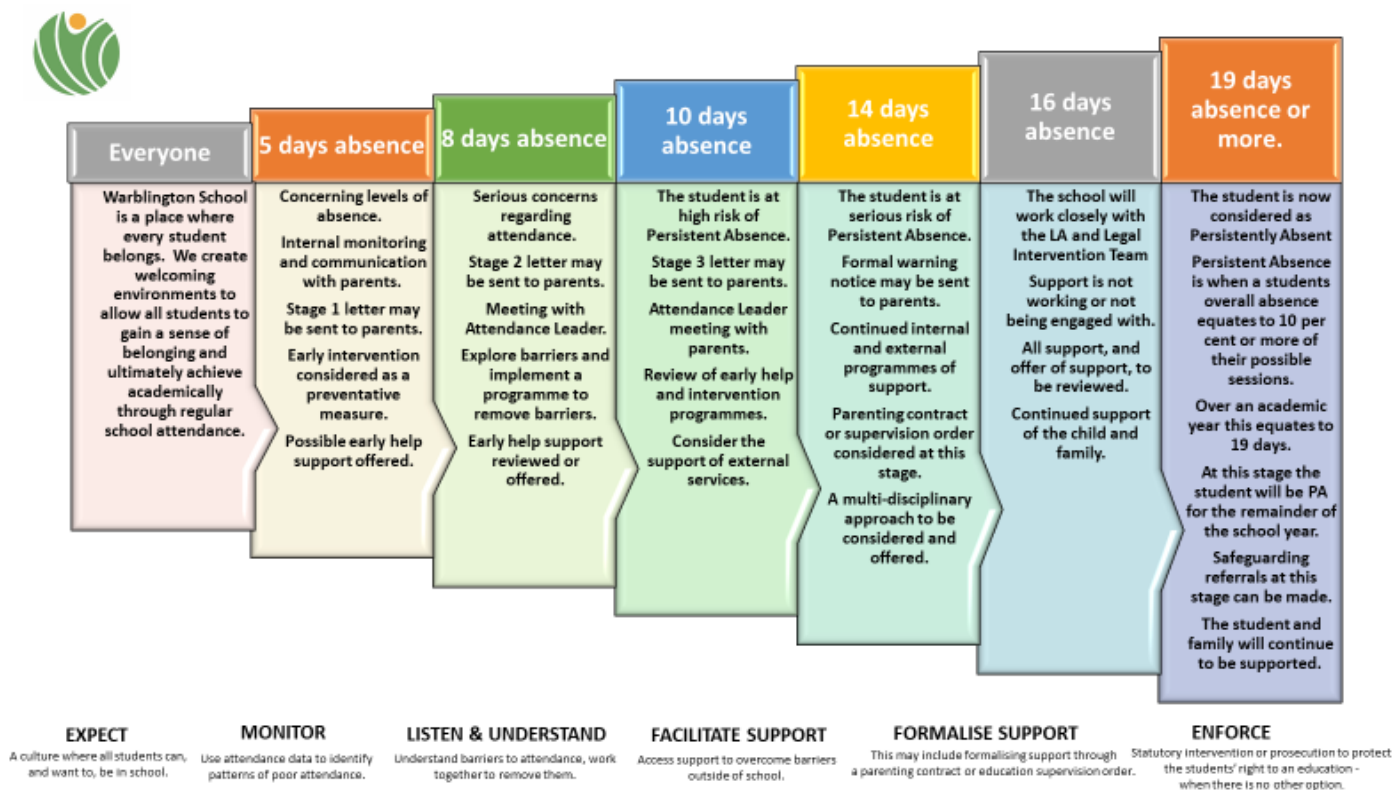
First Day Contact

At Warblington School we expect our parents to make contact at the earliest opportunity on the first day of any absence via Classcharts. Where we have on-going concerns regarding a students' attendance, we will visit home addresses and make further contact in writing. We will invite parents/carers to meet with a member of staff to discuss any on-going concerns regarding attendance. We will encourage parents/carers to talk to us first as they are legally responsible under the Education Act 1996 for ensuring that students are in school every day and on time. If we cannot contact parents/carers via phone, we will continue to make announced and unannounced home visits, regarding any concerns we may have surrounding attendance.

Parents are responsible for securing full-time education

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children receive a full-time education. Each situation will be dealt with on an individual basis, fairly and equitably, always remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern.

The term 'parent' includes those who are not a natural parent but have parental responsibility for the child as defined by the Children's Act 1989 or have care of the child as defined by the Education Act 1996.

- Absence can only be authorised by the school; parents do not have this authority. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless satisfactory evidence for the students' absence has been received. In the first instance contact from the parent will be accepted as evidence. However, if a student's attendance continues to cause concern, parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where absences occur repeatedly due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescriptions etc. Absence may be coded as unauthorised without evidence.
- Parents should, wherever possible, make all medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Appointment cards/text messages should be provided as evidence of medical/dental appointments.
- Unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it has been accepted by the school, absence will not be authorised.

Please view the list of responsibilities and expectations regarding parents.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A child's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniform.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes.
- "Couldn't get up".
- Illness where the student is considered well enough to attend school without medical authority and in the absence of a communicable disease.
- Leave during term time taken without authorisation of the school

Punctuality

Students are expected to be in school by 8:35am when the morning tutor session begins. Students arriving after this will be recorded as late. Late marks will not be authorised and will count as an absence for the school AM session. Punctuality is recorded and this will be added to a students' record of attendance, a letter will be sent to parents every half term regarding punctuality concerns. If a student arrives at school from 9:30am they will be U coded.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if a student has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

Students are expected to be on time to lessons. A 'late bell' rings 3 minutes after the change of lessons and students are expected to be in their next lesson by the time this bell rings. Failure to do so results in a sanction being applied, in accordance with our A-G expectations in our Behaviour Policy

Transition following long term absence or illness

Absence can significantly interrupt the continuity of student's learning.

During any long-term absence, Warblington School will:

- Maintain contact with the student via Classcharts.
- Carefully plan the transition back to school, ensuring they feel welcome and have a sense of belonging.
- Ensure the student once again feels safe in school and if they experience any concerns, they will have an appointed member of staff to work with.
- Class Teachers will support students when returning to lessons and help them to catch up with any work they may have missed.

Leave during Term Time

From 1st September 2013, the Government amended the England (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Headteachers may only grant leave in 'exceptional circumstances' only. Warblington School observes Hampshire County Council School Attendance Guidance for Parents regarding term time leave.

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave during term time must send a written request for the attention of the Headteacher before making any arrangements. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each leave during term time request will be considered on an individual basis.

If a student fails to return and contact with the parent/carer has not been made or received, school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil registration, England) Regulations 2006 and [Children Missing Education](#) guidance. This means that the student may lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student is still absent from school, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may consider legal action.

Only in **exceptional circumstances** will absence be agreed.

Using attendance data

Students attendance will be monitored and shared with other agencies and the DfE in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice.

Weekly attendance meetings will be held between the Attendance Leader and the Attendance Team. Meetings will focus on agreed actions for those students of concern. The purpose of each meeting will be to understand the progress the school is making when supporting identified individuals or groups of students.

Attendance data will be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

It is the responsibility of school Governors to challenge and support the school regarding overall attendance, regular reports will be presented to this body. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided for them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as can be.

Persistent Absence

At Warblington School we aim to communicate the importance of attendance with parents and students. We have a particular focus on reducing Persistent Absenteeism at the school. The Persistent Absence threshold for students is currently 10% and Ofsted will use this threshold in its inspection of schools.

The threshold means that any student will be classed as Persistently Absent when they have missed 38 or more sessions. This equates to 19, or more, missed days during the academic year. This also equates to the equivalent of 1 day of absence, or more, a fortnight across a full school year.

We will use a 19-day tracking system to make parents/carers aware of the number of days a student has missed education. This will allow us to work together to reduce the number of days and attempt to prevent students from reaching this number.

Once a student has reached 38 sessions, or 19 days absence, they will be classified as Persistently Absent, which will then trigger referrals to the Legal Intervention Team for support

Statutory Duty

Section 7 of the [Education Act 1996](#) states that "the parent of every child of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

In accordance with the regulations regarding students' attendance at school, Warblington School keeps an attendance register on which at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session students are marked present or absent. The marks are electronically processed and stored on the school's central administrative system (SIMS). This information is shared with the Department for Education.

Legal Sanctions

There are several sanctions that school can take to address the issue of non-attendance. To try and identify the reason for absence we will always talk to parents/carers first to identify the reason for absence. We will always ensure the escalated process map is followed, focusing on the support a student needs at each stage. Where there is persistent lack of engagement in attendance support there are sanctions that will be followed:

Fixed Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) will be considered when:

- A student is absent from school for the purpose of a Leave of Absence in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A student has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further absence has occurred following written warning to improve

Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with [Hampshire County Council Guidance on the Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices](#)

Prosecution

Where intervention through the school's processes fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the local authority will be notified and legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under section 444/4441 (a) of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child's attendance at school.

Section 4441(a) of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

Schools and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

• Parenting contracts
• Education supervision orders
• Attendance prosecution
• Parenting orders
• Fixed Penalty Notices

Please refer to section 6 of the DFE Working together to improve school attendance 2022 for more information.

Children at risk of Missing in Education (CME)

Children Missing Education (CME) are a vulnerable group of children. All agencies who work with children have a duty to support the Local Authority in ensuring all children are safe and looked after appropriately.

CME includes those children who are **missing** (family whereabouts unknown), and are children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address **and either**

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or
- has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or
- left school suddenly and the destination is unknown

It is our responsibility as a school to work with the LA Education and Inclusion team, by making referrals.

Celebrating Success

Whilst we will challenge failing attendance, we feel it is important to reward students who have sustained good levels of attendance or who have demonstrated significant improvement over a period of time. We will notify parents/carers of our whole school attendance percentage via our newsletter and advise when we have school attendance campaign weeks. Incentives such as the fortnightly Premier League competition between Houses and tutor groups, plus a weekly 95% attendance challenge allows tutor groups to celebrate their collective attendance successes.

Warblington School expectations – Parents/Carers:

i   Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend Warblington School regularly and may risk prosecution if they fail in this responsibility.

ii   Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, with the correct equipment and in full school uniform.

iii   Parents should support the school by avoiding, if possible, non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during the school day.

iv   Parents should be aware that they do not have the automatic right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time.

v   It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence on the first day of absence and in line with the school's procedures for informing of absence.

vi   All unexplained attendances will be monitored and parents will be kept informed about any attendance concerns relating to their own child. Parents are expected to attend meetings when requested and support the school in responding to ongoing attendance concerns.

Warblington School expectations – Students:

i.   All students should aim to have an excellent attendance and punctuality record.

ii.   All students are expected to be on school site on time and ready to learn. Students are expected to be punctual to all registration and all subsequent lessons.

iii.   Students who arrive at school late must follow the correct procedures for recording their lateness and entering their lesson.

iv.   Students who need to leave school for a medical appointment must follow the correct procedures for recording that they have permission to leave and have left the building.

v.   Students must not 'truant' lessons during the school day. This will be seen by the school as a Safeguarding and Health & Safety concern.

vi.   Students must not leave the school without permission. This will be seen by the school as a Safeguarding concern as well as a Health and Safety concern.

Warblington School expectations - Form Tutors/Class Teachers

The Form Tutor and Class Teacher are the key staff members in promoting regular punctual attendance. The Form Tutor and/or Class Teacher will:

i.   provide a good example by always being punctual to registration and meeting students at the door – providing a welcoming environment;

ii.   keep an accurate and up-to-date register of attendance;

iii.   follow the Attendance Policy procedures when dealing with absences and punctuality;

iv.   maintain swift action and effective communication with House Leaders and Attendance Officer on all attendance matters concerning the tutor or class group;

v.   ensure that students are aware of the importance of the school attendance target and their own individual attendance targets - where appropriate assist them in monitoring their own attendance rates;

vi.   ensure students are praised and rewarded in relation to attendance and punctuality success – aligned to the Attendance Policy:

vii.   build a welcoming atmosphere in the classroom and provide support as necessary when students return after an absence.

Warblington School expectations - Inclusion team.

The Inclusion team take responsibility for monitoring the attendance of students and regularly promote the importance of attendance and punctuality. They will:

i.   ensure that their team is aware of their responsibilities with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality and adherence to the attendance policy and procedures;

ii.   ensure that rewards and sanctions for attendance and punctuality follow agreed procedures and align to the Behaviour and Attendance Policies;

iii.   monitor and track the attendance of vulnerable groups;

iv.   monitor the attendance of individual tutor groups and class groups, following up with irregular patterns of absenteeism that are not being effectively addressed;

v.   liaise effectively with the Attendance Officer and work together on ensuring that appropriate action is taken in the management of absenteeism and poor punctuality;

vi.   have attendance as a regular item during pastoral meetings;

vii.   ensure contact is made with parents of poor attendees – always placing support before sanction.

Warblington School expectations - Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer is responsible for regularly checking attendance data and ensuring data is accurate and up to date. The Attendance Officer will:

i.   ensure that data is input daily into the attendance management system;

ii.   ensure that parents/carers of absent students are contacted where notification of absence has not been received;

iii.   respond to any parent/carer seeking support on attendance concerns;

iv.   provide regular attendance and punctuality data for relevant staff and external agencies in line with the agreed procedures and timescales;

v.   be responsible for disseminating important attendance information including informing the Inclusion Team of which students are of concern; in-line with the agreed procedures and timescales;

vi.   be responsible for keeping a record of the interventions in place to encourage attendance and for generating all documentation including letters to parents/carers;

vii.   be responsible for liaising closely with the Local Authority Legal Intervention Team to ensure appropriate levels of intervention take place; referrals are made, and attendance meetings are set up;

viii.   be responsible for managing and maintaining attendance records and systems.

Warblington School expectations – Attendance Leader

The Senior Leader responsible for Attendance will promote good attendance and punctuality. They will:

i.   regularly meet with their Line Manager reporting on progress and next steps planning;

ii.   attend the Inclusion Team attendance meetings;

iii.   implement the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework;

iv.   ensure the Foundations action plan is monitored and actioned throughout the school year;

v.   provide training and support to staff;

vi.   participate in pre-legal meetings;

vii.   use attendance data to make links with attendance and academic performance;

viii.   lead attendance reward assemblies;

ix.   ensure that reference to attendance is included in all school documentation e.g. newsletters, letters to parents, school prospectus, student information booklets.

Relevant legislation

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Relevant government guidance

- Parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour
- Children Missing Education
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Elective Home Education
- Alternative Provision: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities
- Exclusion from Maintained schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions
- Promoting and Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools and Colleges
- Approaches to Preventing and Tackling Bullying