
Policy: Attendance and Absence of Pupils

The school is required by law to distinguish between attendance, absence for approved educational activity, authorised absences, and unauthorised absences, separately for morning and afternoon sessions. Registration and absence details are recorded in iSAMS, the school data base. This data is backed-up weekly with the rest of the isams data.

On a day to day basis this is supervised by the staff in school reception. On all occasions registration is a face to face process. Only designated staff can register pupils.

A.M. In the morning session pupils are registered by tutor group between 0845 and 0915. The registration procedures vary from day to day and from tutor group to tutor group. Most tutors will complete a registration of the tutor group on iSAMS every morning. However, on some days, tutors can register their groups in an assembly hall to facilitate a swift start to the school day. On these days an absence slip is completed which shows known reasons for absence. This slip is handed in at the Reception Office between 0910 and 0915, and the registration secretary will complete the details in iSAMS.

Registration also occurs at the beginning of period 1, by teaching sets. This provides greater security of information about attendance.

Staff should never complete registration in iSAMS when their whiteboard or projector is functioning.

Where a pupil arrives after the register has been marked, (ie. after approximately 0850 and before 0915), the tutor inserts L, (Late) in the attendance register and the pupil will be counted as present. Pupils who arrive after 0915 must sign in showing their time of arrival at the Reception office. (The absence on the computer record will be amended to L.)

Information about reasons for absences should be supplied to the registration secretary in iSAMS or on the absence slip. If an absence is unexplained, the registration secretary will contact a parent to establish the reason. During the course of the morning she will display information received about absence on the board in the staffroom. A list is also passed to housemasters.

P.M. Pupils are registered by teaching group from 1425-1430. Period 9 is five minutes longer than other lessons to ensure there is time to conduct this registration. Teachers will complete a registration in iSAMS. Games staff and occasionally other staff can complete registration by absence slip as described above.

Sixth Form Students who have a study lesson period 9 should report to the Sixth Form Centre between 1425 and 1435 where they are registered by the 6th Form Day Matron.

Absentee lists for each session are posted in the Staff Common Room by the Assistant Secretary.

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If a school trip departs before a morning or afternoon registration the member of staff in charge should complete an absence slip and hand it into the reception office. The registration secretary will complete the details in iSAMS

Attendance registers are marked as follows:

- / \ Present
- B Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)
- C Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
- D Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)
- E Excluded (no alternative provision made)
- F Extended Family Holiday (agreed)
- G Family Holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
- H Family Holiday (agreed)
- I Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
- J Interview
- L Late (before registers closed)
- M Medical/Dental appointments
- N No reason yet provided for absence
- O Unauthorised Absence (not covered by any other code/description)
- P Approved sporting activity
- R Religious observance
- S Study leave
- T Traveller absence
- U Late (after registration closed)
- V Educational visit or trip
- W Work experience
- X Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils
- Y Enforced closure
- Z Pupil not on roll
- # School closed to pupils.

During the designated period of study leave prior to and during the external examinations, Year 11 and 13 pupils are marked S if they are not in school.

ABSENCE OF PUPILS

It is the teacher's duty to check why a pupil is absent from their lessons during the school day; although this might be delegated to the office. If a pupil is missing, staff must follow the procedure outlined in the missing pupil policy.

(a) Pupil absence requested by parents in advance

For day pupils, requests for absence should be obtained from the following staff:

- Holiday leave and absence of over 48 hours should rarely occur, but parents can write to the

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headmaster or deputy head requesting leave of absence. Holiday is sometimes taken as unauthorised absence.

- Permission for absence for significant family events of up to 48 hours is provided by the Deputy Head
- Tutors deal with notification of medical appointments etc.

For boarders there is an occasional need to get permission to leave early or return late from holidays. Requests should be directed to the Headmaster / Deputy Head.

In all day or boarding cases where permission has been granted by the headmaster, he will inform the housemasters/mistresses of the arrangements. The Housemaster/mistress or tutor posts a notice of the pre-arranged absence on the Common Room notice board. It should be noted if any leave is unauthorised.

(b) School activity

An activity pro forma is completed and posted on the common room day-by-day notice board. If the activity has an overnight component then the staff organiser must clear the activity with the Deputy Head.

(c) Non-school activity during the school day

Pupils need their tutor's permission to leave the campus and must sign out in Reception. 6th form students with their own transport are sometimes granted permission to leave school early on a regular basis if their lessons have finished. Permission must be formally sought from the Head of 6th Form, and they must sign out in the usual way.

(d) Weekend and overnight leave for boarders

Boarders may be absent on leave at weekends provided they fulfil all school and house activities that are scheduled for that weekend.

(i) To go home for an overnight visit – Houseparent's permission is required following a request from the boarder's parent.

(ii) To take overnight leave other than with their own parents - Houseparent permission is conditional upon the agreement of the boarder's parent and an assurance from the host that the boarder will be under adult care for the period of the visit. It is expected that the host adult will be known to either the School or the boarder's parent.

(e) Non-school activity outside the normal school day (Mon - Fri: 0830 - 1730).

Boarders must seek the permission of their Houseparent who may consult with the Housemaster/mistress.

(f) University Interviews, Work Experience

Permission is granted and travel details coordinated by the Tutor and the Head of 6th Form who adds the names to the pro forma on common room notice board.

(g) Study Leave

Periods of study leave are determined by the Director of Studies. Parents complete a pro forma which is returned via the Tutor to the Pastoral Deputy

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(g) Boarders' Travel

For boarders the Houseparent coordinates the travel arrangements. The Houseparent posts a notice of absence in the Common Room when travel arrangements result in a boarder missing school.

(h) The tutor is responsible for entering the absence details in iSAMS.

For reasons of courtesy and security:

Pupils are expected to seek the permission of class teachers whenever they need to be absent from lessons.

Boarders must advise their Houseparents whenever they leave the school campus, unless leaving school with a teacher for an activity which does not extend overnight.

Pupil absence from lessons

Non calendared events (e.g. medical appointments, music lessons, some representative matches.....)

Pupils should always seek the teacher's permission to miss a lesson.

Calendared events (i.e. published in calendar booklet or listed in Calendar Changes)

Pupils are encouraged to display the courtesy of seeking permission to be absent from lessons.

The list of pupils engaged in calendared activity is to be found on the CR notice board under the appropriate day.

Where difficulty is likely to arise as a result of a pupil asking to miss a lesson the teacher must not immediately refuse permission but should take the matter up with the member of staff who is sponsoring the activity.

Pupils who persistently do not seek permission should be referred to tutors.

Pupils becoming ill during teaching day

If at all possible pupils should visit the Medical Centre during breaks in teaching.

A pupil requesting to leave a lesson or absent him/herself from the next lesson to visit the Medical Centre must obtain a note from the teacher.

Signing Out of Pupils

All pupils should sign out at the front offices if they are leaving the site during the school day (0840-1700) for medical appointments or other purposes. (In the morning the signing out book is in the Reprographics room, in the afternoon it is in school reception.) Parents should meet their children at the reception / front of school. Pupils should always give the reason for absence on the office form. No pupil should leave the site if they are ill, unless they have seen the duty n

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Education of Absent pupils

For all pupils to fulfil their potential at West Buckland and to make the best use of all of their opportunities here, it is essential that they aim to achieve full attendance. For those being prepared for GCSE or A-level public examinations full attendance is critical to academic success, not least where their subject(s) contains NEA as part of the course. Children whose attendance rate is poor often find that their relationship with their peer group and with the full life of the school is also adversely affected.

When a parent needs to request absence other than for a routine matter such as a medical appointment, this must be in writing to the school, (see page 2 of this document)

Access to Broadband

Where teachers are able to provide work for pupils at home (see below), this is more easily facilitated where the pupil has good access to broadband and Firefly, where all homework is set.

Absence as a result of illness in Years 7-9

For a pupil in Year 9 or below whose absence from school is as a result of an illness, but the nature of the illness is short-term (absent for up to three days), it would not generally be expected that teachers will provide work to do at home. On return to school, the pupil should take the initiative (with the help of their teachers) to copy up missed class work within an agreed time frame. If the illness means that the period of absence is longer than three days or is a recurring medical problem that results in a pattern of regular non-attendance, tutors will liaise with parents to organise with academic staff any work that can be provided. Although some of this work may be sent electronically, this is not always practical or possible because of the nature of the teaching subject and method of delivery. Tutors are responsible for coordinating any request for work from a parent or guardian, having discussed the issue directly with them beforehand. Pupils should not email teachers directly nor expect a response. If a pupil does email a teacher directly, the teacher may simply forward the request to the pupil's tutor for information. Where a great deal of work has been missed the tutor should establish with the pupil and teachers priorities for completion, and oversee a schedule for completion.

Absence as a result of illness in Years 10-13

Because many teachers already have regular email contact with pupils Years 10-13, this helps to facilitate providing work to be undertaken at home during an absence. Pupils in Y10-13 may take the initiative and email teachers directly and, where possible, teachers will respond to these requests with tutors liaising as appropriate. Pupils should not expect an immediate response as the ability to respond quickly may vary between subjects because of the nature of the delivery of the teaching material, or because of the individual circumstances of each teacher.

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Long Term Absence

Very occasionally a pupil enters a pattern of non-attendance for a variety of reasons; these reasons may include a long-term medical problem. When this is the case, pastoral staff—must work with medical professionals to help find the best way to support the pupil during this time. This may involve organising a reduced timetable or shorter school days as a temporary measure, as well as providing work for completion at home. A team around the family (TAF) meeting may be required in such circumstances.

The Pastoral Deputy and Housemasters monitors the absence of pupils. Statistics are prepared by the office and published to the housemasters and pastoral deputy on a half termly basis. Significant absence thresholds are shown below, with the agreed action the school will take. In addition the school monitors patterns of absence.

The school office will produce weekly attendance reports to tutors and HsMs, which will be used to monitor student absence rates. Tutors are to work closely with HsMs and AsHsMs to ensure appropriate action is taken in the case of long-term absence.

See below for a summary of the action the school will take:

Absence level in ONE term	Action	Responsibility	Other
5 or more consecutive days	School to receive a letter from the doctor	HsMs/DHP	
90%	Contact with parents and/or Warning letter	HsMs/DHP	Monitoring attendance closely, next step will be an agreed meeting. A judgement has to be made early in the academic year, as a period of absence can quickly mean the 90% threshold is reached.
85% or 10 consecutive days	TAF meeting	DHP	Meeting with parents, HsM and other suitable authorities to establish support structures. Absence of over 85% will be referred to the local authority. As stated in the Missing Pupil policy, 10 consecutive days without permission, (medical letter etc), will be referred to the LA.

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Planned absence because of a university open day, medical appointment or other reason

In the event of a pupil being absent for a day or part of a day for a scheduled reason such as a medical appointment, university open day, wedding or a funeral, (s)he should do his/her best to collect work before the absence directly from teachers. If this is not possible, (s)he should make up any missed work on return to school within an agreed time frame; teachers will allow a reasonable time for this catch-up particularly if the circumstances of the absence are distressing for the pupil.

Absence due to participation in a school event

Participation in a range of events may, from time to time, involve pupils missing lessons. The most likely occurrence is involvement in a sports tournament whose timing is beyond the school's control, or in 'one off' events which enrich the curriculum. These experiences contribute significantly to the full educational experience provided at West Buckland. Pupils, especially those in Years 10-13, must understand that missing these lessons still requires them to catch up on missed work, and that it is not in their interests to fall behind. In these circumstances, teachers will make reasonable adjustments to their expectations for completion of missed work. Wherever possible, they will enable pupils to copy work and have access to resources used in the lesson. They will also agree a reasonable schedule for completion of assignments.

Absence due to Family Holiday

In the event of a pupil being absent for a day or more due to a family holiday or trip during term-time, there should be no expectation on teachers to provide work before or after the absence. Parents need to be very clear that this absence may have significant consequences on their children's grades awarded in public exams due to the requirements of coursework and loss of access to teaching. Parents planning to take pupils out of school will not have access to the details of the consequences of such a decision, which is part of the reason why the Headmaster's permission for such an absence is critical.

Parents are kindly requested not to arrange holidays in term time and dates are posted well in advance to assist. The importance on learning and beyond is significant for all students not just those absent from school.

Absence due to School Closure

The school will always provide an educational programme during term time. If students cannot manage to attend due to unsafe weather, they should complete work set on Firefly as per the school closure policy.

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