



Attend, Aspire, Achieve

Attendance Information for Parents and Carers

Dear Parents/Carers,

We would like to extend a huge thank you to all our Wellsway School parents and carers for supporting your children to attend school and engage enthusiastically with their learning during this academic year. We know that this reflects the value our families place on education and their children attending every day. In the new academic year, we are looking forward to working with all our existing and new families to support every child to have the best possible attendance to maximise learning and achievement.

At Wellsway School we want and expect our students to attend school every day, unless they are really not well enough to. Children who attend school regularly are more likely to maintain positive friendships; feel happy and settled in school; keep up with the curriculum and their learning, which will maximise their success in education. Supporting good attendance will also help your child develop positive routines that will equip them well as they transition through school and into the workplace.

The Department for Education Policy produce **statutory policy** which schools must follow to support pupils' attendance. This is called '**Working together to improve school attendance**'. There are a number of changes to the policy this year that come into effect in August 2024.

The changes are a mixture of clarification on existing guidance and updates to reflect changes in the law, including the upcoming **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**. As it is a statutory policy, it is coming into effect throughout the Country and, as such, if you have children at another school, you may have received a similar letter from that school.

Two of the key changes can be seen below.

- Schools will now be only able to grant leaves of absence for specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the 2024 attendance regulations.
- There is a new national framework for issuing penalty notices for poor attendance and unexplained absences, to ensure consistency across the country. Penalty notices will increase to £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid after 21 days but before 28 days. Penalty notices will be issued for 10 sessions of absence in a 10-week period, and this does not re- set at holidays, i.e. if you have 4 missed sessions before a holiday and 6 missed sessions after a holiday this would constitute a fine.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

As a school, we want to work with parents and children to provide any support that is needed to help children establish and maintain excellent attendance. Please see important information below about our school's attendance expectations.

Arriving at school on time

School is open to students from 8.30am all students should be on site by 8.40am the school day officially starts at 08:45am which means students are expected to be in lessons and ready to learn at this time.

Arriving at school on time is essential for children's learning. Arriving late not only negatively impacts your child's learning, disadvantaging them, but also disrupts the learning of every other child in the class. If your child arrives late, parents/carers will need to inform the school at the earliest convenience, students will need to sign via student support office. Staff may contact parents/carers of children who arrive late to school regularly, to discuss reasons for lateness and solutions to support them to attend on time.

Illness

Children should attend school every day the school is open unless they are really not well enough. It can be difficult to know if your child is too unwell to attend school. The NHS provide more information on their website around illness and school attendance <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>.

Minor ailments should not be a reason for staying at home. If your child attends school feeling slightly unwell, please let a member of staff know and they can monitor them to see if they need to go home throughout the day. If your child is too ill to attend school, you must notify the school before 8:30am on the first day of absence. If your child is ill for more than one day, you will need to notify the school on each morning of the absence, unless otherwise agreed. To report an absence, contact the school office on 0117 986 4751 (option 2) Please clearly explain the symptoms your child has, when the symptoms started, and when you expect your child to be well enough to return to school. By law, schools must record all absences and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Please try to avoid medical and dental appointments in school time. If this is unavoidable, arrange appointments so the minimum school time is lost. Unless it is an emergency appointment, parents/carers are expected to let the school know about the appointment in advance. Your child should still attend school for as much of the school day as possible.

Unexplained Absences

When the school is not notified of an absence or where the reason for the absence is unclear, the school will follow up on the absence by contacting you. Where there is a failure to notify the school of a reason for the absence, your child absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Where there is cause for concern around the reason for the absence, the school may seek additional information or make a home visit to verify the reason. Unauthorised absences may result in a penalty notice or prosecution.

Term Time Leave

The School **will not** authorise any leave of absence in term time, unless satisfied that the reason is exceptional. Any request for term time leave should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. <https://forms.office.com/e/xZT024ZA8w> The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. A holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation **would not** be considered as exceptional circumstance.

Schools have a duty to ensure children are safe. If a child is absent from school and we do not know the reason, we will follow our safeguarding procedures.

To assist parents/carers in booking holidays and arranging other events, please find detailed below the term dates and inset days for this academic year. Our term date information can also be found here <https://www.wellswayschool.com/parent-carer/#term-dates>

Excellent attendance is intrinsically linked to academic achievement and progress. Children who have regular absence, patterns of unauthorised absence, broken weeks of attendance and high levels of absence for minor illness are unlikely to achieve their academic potential.

More information on attendance can be read in our Futura Trust Attendance Policy that can be located on the school website <https://www.wellswayschool.com/parent-carer/>

If you would like to discuss your child's attendance further, please do not hesitate to contact the school on:

enquiries@wellswayschool.com

Thank you for your continued support.

Your Sincerely,

Mr R Pearsall

*Headteacher Wellsway School and
Executive Head of School IKB Academy*