Wessex Gardens
Primary & Nursery School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy
2026 - 2027

At Wessex Gardens we believe that every child has the right to feel safe and to be protected from any situation or practice that could result in them being harmed. Each child's welfare is of paramount importance and we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in our care and we expect all staff, governors, placements and volunteers to share this firm commitment.

Growing Together

Wessex Gardens Primary and Nursery School is a place where we grow kind, confident, resilient and independent lifelong learners in a trusting and honest environment. Here everyone is welcome and valued. We are motivated and supported to reach our full potential as we continue to aspire to excellence.

This policy was ratified by the governing body on

Review	**July 2027**

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INTENT

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Wessex Gardens Primary and Nursery School.

At Wessex Gardens Primary and Nursery School, all staff work collaboratively to encourage every child to strive for excellence. Every child will be supported, challenged and valued. One way in which we do this is by encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their maximum potential. We are determined in encouraging the development of high self-esteem, and for our children to take pride and ownership of their learning. In conjunction with this, we will continuously provide a clear framework for parents and staff as well as clear procedures for involving parents and/or external agencies where appropriate.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of children that are registered at our school on the school website.

Wessex Gardens Primary and Nursery School encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that Under the Education Act 1996 "parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis".

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1. Aims & Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of, and clear, about the actions necessary to promote excellent attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve children's achievement by ensuring that children have high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues, for which documents have been provided to the school.
- Create an ethos in which excellent attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents/carers and children of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with children, parents/carers, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all children realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which children feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in children a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting excellent attendance.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The appropriate school staff are responsible for:

- Entering pupils on the admissions register.
- In the event that a pupil fails to attend the school on the agreed or notified date, undertaking reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence, and considering notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity.
- Keeping an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents to inform them of any changes.
- Monitoring pupils' attendance through a daily register.
- Agreeing with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of pupils who are regularly absent from school, or who have missed 10 days of education or more without permission.
- Removing pupils from the admission register where they have not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or are absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, and the school and LA have failed to establish the pupil's whereabouts after making reasonable enquiries.
- Notifying the LA if any pupil is to be deleted from the admission register in the circumstance outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016).
- Arranging full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed-period exclusion.

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- Providing information to the LA regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the LA.
- The governing board is responsible for:
- Where reasonably possible, ensuring the school holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.
- All staff are responsible for:
- Being alert to the potential need to implement early help for a pupil who is frequently missing or goes missing from care or home.
- Being aware of the school's procedures for managing unauthorised absence and children missing from education.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated to the DSL or deputy DSL.

The LA is responsible for:

- Establishing the identities of children in the area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving education provision otherwise, in line with the LA's duty under the Education Act 1996.
- Providing full-time education for permanently excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a suspension.
- Serving notices on parents to assure the LA that their child is receiving a suitable education, when concerns regarding this are brought to the LA's attention.
- Issuing School Attendance Orders to parents who fail to assure the LA that their child is receiving a suitable education, and the LA believes that the child should attend school.
- Prosecuting parents that do not comply with a School Attendance Order.
- Prosecuting or fining parents of school-registered children who fail to ensure their children attend school regularly.
- Ensuring that children identified as not receiving suitable education are returned to full-time education either at the school or elsewhere.
- Ensuring that the school demonstrates prompt action and effective early intervention procedures to ensure children are safe and receiving suitable education.
- Applying to court for an Education Supervision Order for a CME.
- Ensuring that children who return to full-time education are appropriately supported, taking into account the reasons why they missed education in the first place.
- Arranging suitable provision for pupils with SEN statements or EHC plans where their parent chooses for them to be home educated and reviewing this annually.
- Liaising and sharing information with other agencies to support children who miss education.
- Sharing the fact that a pupil has a social worker with the school.
- Referring to the LA's CSCS where there is concern for a child's welfare, as well as the police if there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed.
- Parents are responsible for:
- Ensuring that their children, if of compulsory school age, are receiving suitable full-time education.
- Notifying the school in writing where they will be home-schooling their child, in order for the child to be removed from the admissions register.
- Where requested, meeting with the school, LA, and other key professionals to consider whether home education would be in the best interests of their child, particularly where they have SEND, are vulnerable, or have a social worker – ideally, this would be done before a final decision has been made.

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- Notifying the school regarding any absences or changes to the pupil's education arrangements.

Parents/Carers Responsibility
Children who are persistently late or absent fall behind with their learning.

Children who are absent from school frequently develop gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and ability to meet age related learning expectations.

A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

3. Punctuality

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To ensure that their child/children arrive to school on time between 8:30 am and 8:40 am (unless they attend the breakfast club) and leave sufficient time to get to the classroom by 8:45 am.
- To report to the school office to sign in their child/children if they arrive after 9am. Records are kept of the children that are late with an L code in the register. Any child that arrives after 9:15 am will be marked with a U code, equivalent to an unauthorised absence.

Persistent Latecomers
Children who repeatedly attend school late after 9:00 am will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. Warning letters will be issued to the parents/carers of these children

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after 9:15 am are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence, and this will affect the child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after this time.

End of the school day:
It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day, and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home.

If these differ from the child's normal arrangements, the class teacher and school office should be made aware of this.

Children who have not been collected by 3:45 pm will be placed in the After School Club until the parent arrives to collect.

The charge is £5 if the child is collected prior to 4:30 pm and £10 if the child is collected between 4:30 pm and 5:45 pm.

4. Absences

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to:

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- notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:00 am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by leaving a message on the absence line, telephoning the school office, or by email;
- provide medical evidence, where possible, on the child's return to school;
- ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before and return to school after the appointment;
- liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, for example a sick parent/carer.

Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:30 am.

Illness/Medical absences

In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences.

This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription or bringing the child to school to see the welfare officer.

Nursery Attendance

Attending a nursery school gives your children a valuable introduction to school. It gives children the opportunity to develop their skills and mix with others of their own age.

Children are not of statutory school age until the term after their fifth birthday. However, establishing regular routines for your child at an early age is extremely important. It will benefit both you and your child as they progress through their school life, and limit the chances of poor attendance, which will have a negative effect on their enjoyment and achievement.

Evidence has shown that children who have a smooth and positive start at school remain high achievers throughout their primary education and beyond.

If your child does not attend nursery regularly they may lose their place. If they cannot attend for any reason, always let the school office know. You can help your child to have a positive time at nursery by making sure they attend their nursery provision regularly and arrive on time.

Your child is at risk from losing their place in our nursery if they are absent for a period of 10 consecutive school days or more, for example to go on holiday.

Absences either side of a school holiday

The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday.

A Fixed Penalty Notice will be requested from the Local Authority if evidence is not provided.

Absence for holidays

Permission will not be granted for holidays.

Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.

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Exceptional leave of absence

If there are exceptional circumstances, parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior).

These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the business leader or headteacher, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to:

- obtain a leave of absence form from the school office.
- complete and submit the form in advance of booking tickets for the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).
- provide a copy of the booking document clearly showing that the booking was made after consultation with the school
- provide a document to confirm the exceptional circumstance

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the school's authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised, and the absence will be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued by the Education Welfare Service for unauthorised holiday absence during term time. This fine is payable at £80 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days and £160 if paid within 28 days.

Absence for other reasons

Absences for reasons such as religious observance (one day per religious holiday up to a maximum of 2 days per year) or close family bereavement (up to a maximum of 5 days if overseas) *may* be authorised by the headteacher.

Absences for close family members' weddings or funerals will be limited to one day's authorised absence, if granted.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to:

- inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register;
- complete a leave of absence request form prior to booking travel.

Absence will NOT be authorised

- During the week of KS2 SATS testing in May
- During the KS1 assessment period.
- During the Year 1 Phonics screening
- During the Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check (MTC)

Unexplained Absence

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carer may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

5. Role of the Education Welfare Officer

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Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer, and may be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss the absences and offered support to improve attendance.

The Education Welfare Officer:

- investigates attendance below 96% if children have unauthorised absences;
- writes to parents/carers or invites them to attend a meeting to discuss the absences;
- arranges Court Assessment Meetings with parents/carers with frequent absences or absence exceeds 10%;
- investigates lateness which exceeds 5%;
- investigates any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days;
- ensures parents/carers are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school;
- refers cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.
- reports whole school and individual attendance data when required.

6. Children Missing Education

- See Appendix One - Children Missing From Education Supplementary Policy

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Appendix 1 - Children Missing From Education Supplementary Policy

Reasons for children missing education

There are a number of reasons as to why children miss education, including the following:

- Failing to be registered at a school at the age of five
- Failing to make a successful transition
- Exclusion
- Mid-year transfer of school
- Families moving into a new area

Aside from these reasons, if a child is missing from education, particularly repeatedly, this can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, such as the following:

- Abuse and neglect, including child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE), potentially involving county lines
- So-called 'honour-based' abuse, including FGM and forced marriage
- Mental health issues
- Risk of substance abuse
- Risk of travelling to conflict zones

Staff will be aware that early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding relating to CME and to help prevent the risks of a pupil going missing in the future. All staff will be made aware of unauthorised absence procedures and this policy to ensure they know how to respond to possible cases of CME.

Children at particular risk of missing education

As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, the school will use its professional judgement on a case-by-case basis. The following list, however, indicates groups of pupils who are most at risk of missing education and the procedures the school will follow in response:

Pupils at risk of harm or neglect – where this is suspected, local child protection procedures will be followed; however, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made immediately to children's social care services (CSCS), and the police if appropriate. The LA officers responsible for CME will check whether a referral has been made and will contact CSCS if this is not the case. Should there be a reason to suspect a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the LA will contact the police.

Pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families – when a pupil from a GRT family leaves the school without naming their next destination school, the school will contact the LA. If necessary, the school will consult the LA Traveller Education Support Services or named CME officer for advice on the best strategies to ensure minimal disruption to the pupil's education.

Children of service personnel – the school will contact the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service for advice to ensure continuity of education for these pupils.

Missing children and runaways – should the school suspect a child has gone missing or run away, an appropriate staff member will consult the DfE for advice on missing children.

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Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System – in this case, LA youth offending teams are responsible for supervising children (aged 8 to 18). Where a young person is registered at the school prior to custody, the school will keep the place open for their return.

Children who cease to attend school – where the reason for a pupil who has stopped attending a school is not known, the LA will investigate the situation.

Children of migrant families – the school will remain vigilant to the increased risk of a child missing education if they are part of a new migrant family who may not yet have settled into a fixed address, or may have arrived into an LA area without the authority becoming aware.

Induction and training

The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education will be explained to staff during their induction.

All staff will receive annual safeguarding and child protection training, including an update on the various safeguarding concern possibilities that CME could represent, any changes to the early help process and staff members' role in this process.

Working with others

Families moving from one LA to another can sometimes lead to a child being lost in the system and consequently missing education. When a child moves, LAs will work with other LAs, regionally or nationally, to ensure this does not happen.

The LA will raise awareness of its procedures with local schools, partners and agencies working with children and families. The school will ensure that staff are familiar with these procedures and when they need to be followed.

The school uses a secure internet system, School to School (S2S), to allow schools to transfer pupil information when a child moves to another education setting.

If a pupil with a social worker is absent from school for an unexplained reason or they are missing from education, the school will inform the pupil's social worker.

Safeguarding

The school recognises that CME can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. Where there are concerns that a pupil missing from education is linked to a safeguarding issue, action will be taken in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

In line with the Children Act 2004, the school will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the DSL conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.

For the purpose of this policy, "reasonable enquiries" are defined as limited, investigative powers that the school may action to determine a child's whereabouts and whether they may be in danger.

The DSL will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to CSCS or the police.

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Where the whereabouts and safety of a child is unknown, the school, in conjunction with the LA, may carry out the following actions:

- Make contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Check local databases
- Check data transfer systems
- Follow local information sharing arrangements, and make enquiries via other local databases and agencies where possible
- Check with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force
- Check with agencies known to be involved with the family
- Check with the LA and school from which the pupil moved originally
- Check with the LA where the pupil lives, if this is different to where the school is located
- Check with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service in the case of children of service personnel
- Conduct home visits via an appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessments, and make enquiries with neighbours or relatives, if appropriate

Please note: This list is not exhaustive – the school and LA will use their judgement towards what reasonable enquiries are appropriate, once all the facts of the case have been taken into account.

Admissions register

The school will ensure that the admissions register is kept up to date at all times, and will encourage parents, via communications such as emails and newsletters, to notify the school of any changes as they occur.

Pupils will be recorded on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the school, or the day that the school has been notified, as the date that the pupil will attend the school. Once a pupil has been recorded on the admissions register, the school will notify the LA within five days, and will supply the LA with all of the details contained on the admissions register for the new pupil.

Where a parent notifies the school that their child will live at another address, the school will record the following information on the admissions register:

- The full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live
- The new address
- The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address

Where a parent notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school, or will be attending a different school in future, the school will record the following information on the admissions register:

- The name of the new school
- The date when the pupil first attended, or is due to attend, that school

Parents are able to elect to educate their children at home and will subsequently withdraw them from school. This can happen at any time unless the pupil is subject to a School Attendance Order.

If a parent notifies the school that their child will be educated at home, the pupil will be deleted from the school's admission register and the school will inform the LA.

Removing a pupil from the admissions register

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The school will inform the LA of any pupil who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parent and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home-schooled.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither they nor their parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order, and the school does not reasonably believe they will be returning at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.
- Have died.
- Have been registered at another school where it is not indicated this should be the case.
- Are registered at more than one school but have failed to attend the school and the proprietor of any other schools concerned have consented to the deletion.
- Have been granted authorised leave but have failed to attend school within 10 school days after the period of authorised absence ended, and:
    - -There is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school.
    - The LA and school are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- Have been continuously absent from school for a period of at least 20 school days, and:
    - -The absence was not authorised.
    - -There is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school.
    - -The LA and school are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- Have been admitted to receive nursery education and since completion have not transferred to Reception, or a higher class, at the school.

The school will notify the LA that a pupil is to be removed from the admissions register as soon as any of the above criteria are met, and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is actually removed.

If a pupil's name is to be removed from the admissions register, the school will provide the LA with the following information:

- The full name of the pupil
- The full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives
- At least one telephone number of the parent with whom the pupil lives
- The full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable
- The name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date, if applicable
- The grounds for removal from the admissions register under Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), as outlined in this policy.
- Where the name of a pupil with a social worker is to be removed from the admissions register, the school will inform the pupil's social worker.

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