



28 January 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

School Attendance

We would like to provide all families with a clear outline of our absence procedures to help guide families and explain the records we have to keep. The Governors have made it clear that they will support the Headteacher and the Education Welfare Service, in promoting high levels of attendance and act where there are unsatisfactory reasons for absence.

Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning. However, in the event of unavoidable absence this letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

Types of Absence

Each absence is classed as **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Examples of reasons for absence that will be recorded as unauthorised:

- shopping visits
- parental illness or care for family members (unless Young Carer or exceptional circumstances?)
- days out to theme parks or concerts/shows
- parents' work commitments or helping in the family business
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)

Illness and First Day Call

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us by email to attendanceofficer@wensleydaleschool.net or telephone 01969 621041 on the first day of absence, before 9.00am. It is useful to know the expected day of return. If you do not supply us with this information, we have a duty to contact you, every day so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts. This is a national safeguarding measure. If we have no response, our Headteacher has a duty of care to undertake home visits to ensure everyone is safe and well.

Where a child is absent through illness or medical appointments, this will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns due to absence patterns through illness, we will need to discuss this with parents in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Where possible these should be arranged outside school hours. However, where children need to attend appointments during the school day, it is important to let us know in advance. Medical and Dental appointments count as authorised absences.



Emergency Occasions

There are some occasions e.g. bereavements, family problems, etc where students do not attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs, but please inform us of the reason, so we can support your child on their return.

Lateness

Please try to ensure that your child arrives at school for registration; this is recorded at 9:05am each day. Late marks are recorded up to 9.30am. If a child arrives after 9:30am, it will be recorded as arriving after the register closes and they will not receive the mark for the morning session.

Leave of Absence:

Holidays

The DfE has made it clear that we are unable to authorise holidays in term time. The only exemption is where parents are on active service in the Armed Forces, which prevents family vacations to be taken in school holidays. Unauthorised term time holidays, will be reported to the local authority and fines issued as appropriate, we are under a duty to do this.

Approved Public Performance

Where parents wish to take their child(ren) out of school during term time for purposes other than holidays, they should complete the leave of absence form. This may include performances in a licensed show or for a county or national sporting team/event. Leave of absence forms can be found on our website.

Attendance targets

Average school attendance is classed as over 95% for the year, with outstanding attendance above 97%.

Below 94% is weak, under 90% is poor and attendance below 85% is classed as a serious concern. Below 90% is regarded as persistent absence by the DFE.

Attendance is monitored weekly and the local authority fast track letters are issued to parents where student attendance falls below 90%. Student attendance is then monitored weekly until sustained improvement is achieved.

Where a child's attendance is at 91-92% parents will be alerted via an emailed letter, with the aim to prevent them falling below 90%.



WENSLEYDALE
SCHOOL
LEYBURN

We have a duty to follow the local authority attendance procedures, which can be found here <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/resources-for-families/> We hope that these notes will help you to understand Wensleydale School's attendance procedures. If you have any questions please contact Julie Cooper (attendance officer) on 01969 621041 or email attendanceofficer@wensleydaleschool.net

Best regards

Rachel Smith

Assistant Headteacher
Data & Exams

Julie Cooper

Attendance Officer