

# Wentworth Primary School

'Striving for Excellence'



## Attendance Newsletter 1 - October 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back to our new school year and a warm welcome to our new Foundation children and their families.

As we start this school year, we would like to take the opportunity to say 'THANK YOU' to all our families who consistently work to ensure their children's attendance and punctuality is high. Getting these important habits established early on in your child's life will make a difference in their futures.

As part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring the best educational experience for our pupils, we would like to remind you of some important changes to school attendance legislation that came into effect in August 2024.

**Mrs Kelly Gunning**  
Attendance Officer

## The School Day

- Gates open at 8.40am
- Gates close at 8.50am
- Break: KS1 10.20 am  
KS2 10.40 am
- Lunch: KS1 11.45 am  
KS2 12.00 pm
- School Finishes: KS1 3.10pm  
KS2 3.15pm



## New Attendance Legislation - August 2024

The updated legislation emphasises the importance of regular school attendance and introduces new measures aimed at reducing avoidable absences. Key changes under the new law include:

**Term-Time Holidays:** Under the new rules, **term-time holidays will not be authorised**, except in exceptional circumstances. Taking children out of school during term time for holidays disrupts their learning and affects their academic progress. The legislation sets clear expectations for schools to take action when students miss school due to unauthorised holidays.

**Fines for Unauthorised Absences:** Essex County Council now expect schools to issue fines to parents/carers for unauthorised absences, including term-time holidays. These fines are part of the legal framework designed to reinforce the importance of full attendance. Schools are required to work with local authorities to ensure this policy is consistently enforced. We encourage families to carefully plan holidays during school breaks to avoid penalties.

**Punctuality and Lateness:** Punctuality is essential for your child's education. Under the updated legislation, if your child arrives after 9:20 am, when the registers are officially closed, they will receive a mark that shows that they are onsite 'U', but it will not count as a present mark and will be treated as an unauthorised absence. Persistent lateness, especially unauthorised lateness, may result in the school referring the matter to the local authority for sanctions or potential legal proceedings.

**Sickness Absence:** Under the new statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed 15 or more school days (30 sessions - consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

For more information regarding our School Attendance Policy please click on the link below:

[https://www.wentworth.essex.sch.uk/download\\_file/4509/212](https://www.wentworth.essex.sch.uk/download_file/4509/212)

# The Importance of Regular Attendance

Research shows that consistent attendance is critical for academic success. Missing school, even for short periods, can lead to learning gaps and affect a child's confidence and performance. With the introduction of this new legislation, we are committed to working closely with parents to ensure students are in school, learning, and thriving.

## What You Can Do:

- **Plan holidays during school breaks:** We kindly ask parents to schedule family holidays during official school breaks to avoid the risk of fines.
- **Communicate with us:** If your child is absent due to illness or exceptional circumstances, please notify the school as soon as possible.
- **Encourage daily attendance:** Let your child know how important their education is by encouraging them to attend school regularly and on time.

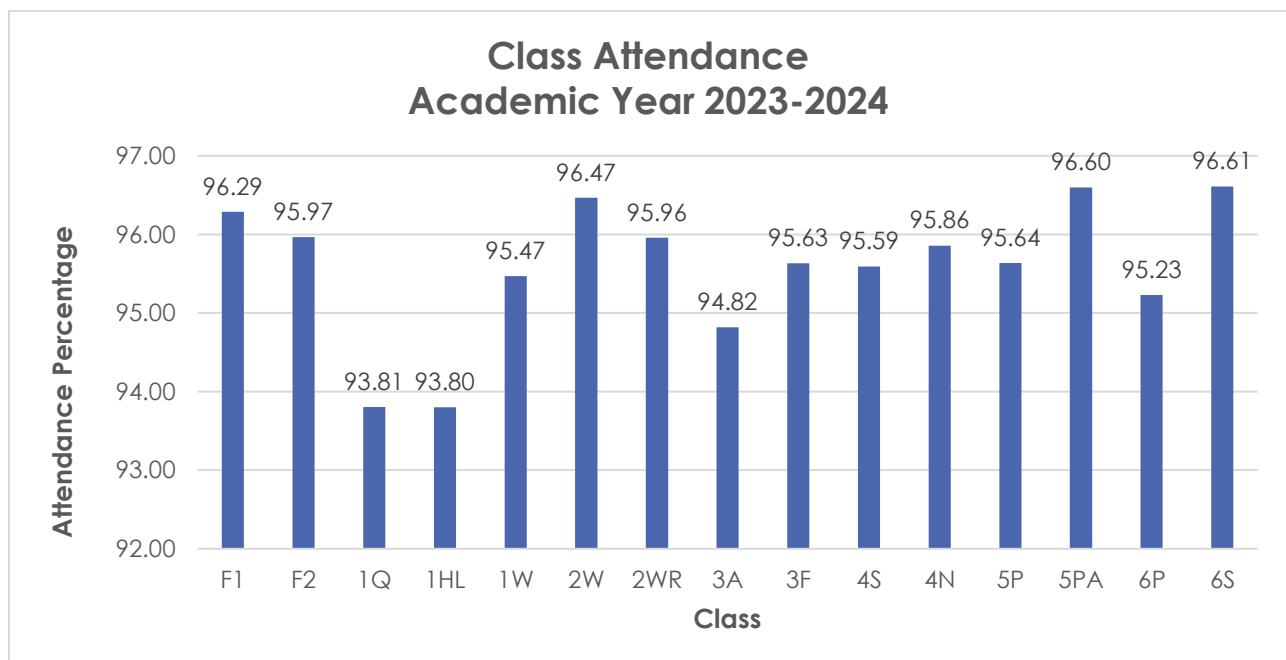
We understand that every family has unique circumstances. If you have any concerns or need support regarding attendance, please do not hesitate to contact the school. We are here to help and work together to ensure every child receives the best possible education.

## Attendance and Absence Figures

The Department for Education expects a minimum school attendance rate of 96%. Attendance of 96% or higher is considered good, while attendance below 90% is considered poor. A child who falls below 90% attendance is considered to be persistently absent.

At Wentworth, we aim for 96% attendance, which would bring us in line with the National average and we report our attendance figures to the Local Authority on a weekly basis.

The whole school attendance figure for the 2023-24 academic year was 95.6%. Whilst this figure is higher than the previous year, and is virtually in line with National average, we believe we can aim for higher



Well done to classes 2W (KS1) and 6S (KS2) for having the best attendance throughout the school for the last Academic Year.

# 100% Attendance

The below table shows the number of children in each class that achieved 100% attendance for the whole 2023-2024 Academic Year.

F1	F2	1W	1HL	2W	2WR	3F	4S	4N	5P	5PA	6P	6S
2	1	3	1	3	3	1	2	1	2	2	1	4

Huge Congratulations goes to:

**Frankie, Nicholas, Harley, Bethany, Isla, Coby, Vivian, Elsie, Emily, Gemma, Oliver, Harriet, Sophia, Willow, Lizzie, Seth, Esmee, Darcey, Keely, Megan, Jessica, Amber, Henry, Evie, Martha, Lewis and Hetty**



We understand and appreciate that children can become ill and may need to have a few days off school. We are also aware, however, that at times children miss school when they could be in. Sometimes it is worth children coming into school and giving it a go. The guidance below may help you decide if your child is well enough to come to school.

If your child is having a regular, recurring medical issue, please let us know. We could get the school nurse involved and hopefully address your child's medical needs and improve their attendance.

RED – STAY AT HOME	AMBER – SEEK ADVICE	GREEN – COME TO SCHOOL
<p><b>Temperature over 37.5</b> – If your child has a raised temperature, they should not attend school. They may return 24 hours after they start to feel better.</p> <p><b>Sickness &amp; Diarrhoea</b> – Children with these conditions should be kept off school. They may return 48 hours after their symptoms disappear.</p> <p><b>Rashes</b> – Can be the first sign of an infectious illness. If your child has a rash, check with your GP or practice nurse before sending them to school.</p>	<p><b>Headache, Feeling Sick, Tummy Ache, Earache</b></p> <p>Children can come to school with the above – give them some medicine if you feel they need it.</p> <p>Children often feel unwell if they are anxious - if in doubt, contact the school for advice.</p>	<p><b>Mild Cough, Cold, Sore Throat, Feeling Tired, Hay Fever</b></p> <p>We have first aiders on-site and will always contact you if your child is ill during the school day and not well enough to be in.</p>

If your child is absent for 3 days or more with an illness, we would expect them to have seen a doctor and will ask for evidence of an appointment or medicine prescribed.

We will also require a doctor's note or evidence of an appointment, for all absences of pupils whose attendance is below 95%. If these are not provided, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

If your child is too ill to attend school, please contact the school office before 9.20am with full details of your child's illness/symptoms. If we do not hear from you, we will call you to find out why your child is not in school.

## Reporting an Absence



Attendance Absence Line: 01621 853572 option 2

Email: [office@wentworth.essex.sch.uk](mailto:office@wentworth.essex.sch.uk)

If your child is too ill to attend school, please contact the school office before 9.20am with full details of your child's illness/symptoms.

Simply stating that your child is “**unwell**” or “**poorly**” is not sufficient reason for an authorised absence and will be followed up for additional information. Should we fail to receive a specific reason for absence, then it will be recorded as unauthorised.

In order for us to safeguard our pupils, it is important that the school receives a message on **each day** of absence.

If we do not receive notification of a pupil's absence, then contact will be made with the priority contact on our files. Any absences that are not reported by parents will be marked as unauthorised.

If we do not have regular contact from parents of an absent child, this will become a safeguarding issue. We would then carry out a home visit for a welfare check.

In the case of a routine dental or medical appointment a maximum of a half day of absence will be authorised.

## Punctuality



Children must be in school on time, this means being in the classroom and ready to learn by 8.50am when the registers are taken.

It is important that children arrive at school on time for many reasons:

- When a child arrives late for school, they miss the introduction to the day and valuable learning time such as Phonics lessons and Morning Challenges.
- Being late can impact on their attendance, but it is also **disruptive** to the rest of the class when they have started their lessons.
- It can be embarrassing for children who walk into class after everyone else is in and settled.
- Children may miss important information about what to expect from the rest of the school day.
- Missing the beginning of the lesson makes it hard to catch up with the other children.
- Being punctual is a vital habit for future employability.

The school gates open at 8.40am and close at 8.50am. The register is taken, and learning starts at 8.50am. If your child arrives after the gates have closed, they need to report to the office where they will be marked as 'L' for arriving late.

If your child arrives after the registers are closed at 9.20am, then they will be marked as 'U' for unauthorised lateness. This code covers the entire morning session and will affect your child's attendance record.

## Leave of Absence Request

If you wish to take your child out of school during term time, you **MUST** complete a Leave of Absence Request Form, available from Reception, and return to the school office **at least 7 days before the first day of absence**.

## Working Together

Our aim at Wentworth is always to work with families to help improve a child's attendance. We know that there are many reasons why children do not attend school, so we want to support families on an individual basis. However, when we are not successful in supporting families, or they refuse to engage, the law protects pupil's rights to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise improvement efforts.

As such, parents could be:

- Issued a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Local Authority for the child's non-attendance (the penalty is **£80** per parent, per child and this rises to **£160** per parent, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days).
- Prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the Education Act 1984.

Whole School  
Attendance  
so far this academic  
year:

**97.2%**

If you have any questions or queries,  
please do not hesitate to contact us:

**Attendance Officer**  
Mrs K Gunning

**Telephone**  
01621 853572

**Email:**  
[office@wentworth.essex.sch.uk](mailto:office@wentworth.essex.sch.uk)

## What will the school do to support good attendance?

- We aim to make school an exciting place to learn so that children want to come every day.
- We encourage parents and carers to come in and talk to us if there are any hurdles to getting their child to school every day.
- We will do our best to support families in any way that we can.
- We will reward good attendance in school.
- We will regularly monitor children's attendance and contact families when attendance falls below 90%.

## What can parents do to support good attendance?

- Parents should bring their children to school every day that they are well enough to attend.
- If there is a reason that your child does not want to come to school, talk to us about it. Keeping a child at home does not give us the opportunity to solve the problem.
- Bring children to school on time every day.
- Speak to your child about the importance of attendance and punctuality.

**School Matters!**



**Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow**



## Essex County Council

### Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

From 19 August 2024, there is a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines being issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools

#### National Threshold

A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by ALL schools in England, this is:

- 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period
- These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence
- For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold
- The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years

#### Who may be fined?

- Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school
- For example, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines

#### First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be:

- £80 per parent, per child if paid **within 21 days**
- If **not paid within 21 days**, the fine will increase to **£160 per parent, per child**, payable between the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> day

#### Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be:

- £160 per parent, per child – payable within 28 days

#### Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice WILL NOT be issued, and the case will be presented **straight to the Magistrate's Court**

- **Prosecution** can result in **criminal records** and **fines of up to £2,500**
- Cases found **guilty** in a **Magistrates Court** can show on the parent's future DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a **'failure to safeguard a child's education'**