

WESSEX GARDENS PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE GUIDE FOR PARENTS

RECEPTION TO YEAR 6

ACADEMIC YEAR 2016 – 2017

Wessex Gardens Primary School Attendance Guide for Parents

The following information applies to parents of all children at Wessex Gardens School.

The senior leader responsible for attendance is the Business Manager supported by the office team who are the first point of contact in the school for parents reporting absences.

We have a very successful whole school strategy of improving attendance through working in partnership with parents and children. Attendance at Wessex Gardens is consistently above 96% and we need you and your child's contribution to ensure that we maintain this. We are aware that there will be occasional exceptional circumstances that will require individual support or alternative arrangements. As a staff team we are available and we encourage parents to discuss any difficulties they may be experiencing. Good attendance and punctuality ensures that children develop good social skills, have full access to education and achieve their full potential. Please note that parents are not entitled to take their child out of school for holidays and such absences will be subject to a fine from the Local Authority referred to as a Fixed Penalty Notice (see Q11).

Statistics show that a child who is absent for one day per fortnight will have missed one year of school (190 days) by the time they leave secondary education.

Recognition for excellent attendance

The school celebrates excellent class and individual children's attendance in assemblies. Certificates for 100% attendance are awarded to children:

- half termly for 100% attendance for the half term
- termly for 100% for the whole term
- annually for 100% for the whole academic year

Absences prior to or after a school holiday

Please note that we require a medical document for all absences either prior to or after a school holiday. The Education Social Worker may also visit your home to check that your child is ill.

Q1. When does my child need to arrive at School?

- The school will be open in the morning from 8:40 am or at 8.00 am for children attending the breakfast club.
- Your child should be in class by **8:40 am** for prompt Registration at 8.50 am.
- All children must be accompanied to their class by an adult.
- Children must not be left in school before 8:40 am unless they are with a parent/carer as they will be unsupervised, staff cannot accept responsibility for children arriving before 8:40 am.

Q2. What happens if my child is late?

- If your child arrives after **8:50 am** you should bring your child to their class via the **main entrance** and he / she will be given a blue Late Slip.
- If your child arrives after 9.00 am, they should report to the office to collect an orange Late Slip and sign the Late Book. This is extremely important as your child will not be entered in the register if you do not sign the late book and in the event of an emergency this could have serious repercussions as we have no record that your child is in school.
- If your child arrives after **9:15 am** they will receive an **unauthorised absence** mark for the morning session instead of a late mark.
- Where children arrive after **9:15 am** parents are expected to provide an acceptable reason for lateness. Until such information has been received, and the explanation for lateness accepted by the School, your child's mark will remain as an **unauthorised** absence. This counts as an absence for the morning session and it will be shown on your child's end of year report. Your child may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer for action after he/she has received 3 unauthorised late marks.

Q3. How can I notify the school that my child is absent?

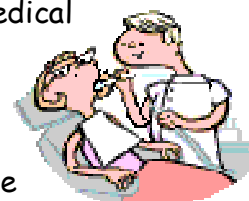
- You can telephone the school on 020 8455 9572 option 1 and leave a message on the first day of absence and update us each day if the absence continues.
- You can email the school at office@wessexgardens.barnet.sch.uk.

Please provide a written explanation on your child's return to school. **Please also bring any medication that a doctor has prescribed into school or an appointment card to show that your child was examined by a doctor.**

If you experience difficulties communicating in this way please speak to the Business Manager.

Q4. What reasons does the school accept for absence?

- Genuine illness. Please show a doctor's appointment card or medical evidence to the office staff when your child returns to school.
- Unavoidable urgent medical/dental appointments. All routine appointments should take place after school or in school holidays.
- Day of religious observance - one day only on the actual day of the observance. Please inform the school office prior to the absence.
- Family bereavement.
- Participation in an approved public performance.



The medical evidence can either be an appointment card to show that your child has been seen by a doctor or any medication that a doctor has prescribed.

We require a medical document for all absences either prior to or after a school holiday. The Education Social Worker may also visit your home to check that your child is ill.

In cases of recurring absences or attendance below 96% you will need to bring in either an appointment card to show that your child's illness has been assessed by your GP or any medication that has been prescribed for your child. **Please note that unless medical evidence is provided recurring/frequent absences are treated as unauthorised.**

In cases of urgent medical/dental appointments parents are expected to produce an appointment card and children are expected to attend school prior to and after the appointment. Where the appointment is at the beginning of the day you should bring your child to school afterwards. For appointments later in the day your child should be collected early from school.

Q5. Can my child attend school when he/she is on medication?

Yes, your child can come back to school as soon as he/she is feeling better. You will need to bring the medication to school and complete a form allowing a member of staff to administer the medication.

Q6. What is an unacceptable reason for absence?

The school will not authorise absences for:

- A child being tired
- Day trips
- Holidays
- Birthdays
- Visiting relatives
- Collecting relatives from an airport
- Shopping
- Parent has to look after siblings who are ill. We ask that you make alternative arrangements for someone to look after the sibling whilst you bring your child to school
- Parent illness. We ask that if you are ill and unable to bring your child to school you make arrangements for a friend or relative to bring your child to school
- Parent unable to bring their child to school as they are away and their child is staying with a friend or relative who is unable to bring your child to school. We ask that you ensure that your friend or relative can bring your child to school prior to making arrangements to go away.
- Parent unable to collect their child on time. We ask that you make alternative arrangements or register your child for the after school club that day
- Non urgent medical or dental appointments
- Non urgent medical or dental appointments
- Unexceptional special occasions, e.g. birthdays

- Exceptional leave of absence longer than the duration originally authorised by the Headteacher / Business Manager
- Exceptional leave of absence where prior permission was not sought or where permission was refused

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

Q7. What is an unauthorised absence?

These are absences where:

- We do not receive an explanation.
- Your child has frequent absences without medical evidence.
- The explanation is unsatisfactory (see Q6 for details)

Unauthorised absences show up on your child's attendance report that you will receive at the end of each year with your child's report.



Q8. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

We will make every effort to telephone you if your child fails to attend school in time for morning registration. However, it should be noted that **you are expected to contact the school yourself on the first day of your child's absence by calling 0208 455 9572 and selecting option 1.** Please note, that this is an answering phone service and will not be answered by a member of staff. Therefore, please do not use it for any purpose other than to report absence.

The school will communicate with you regarding attendance issues. These follow Government guidelines stating that a child's attendance at school should be 96% or above if they are to achieve their full potential.

Q9. Will the school monitor my child's attendance?

The school monitors attendance for all children closely and the name of any child whose attendance is below 96% is entered on a monitoring list. Parents receive a courtesy letter notifying them that their child's attendance is below 96%.

Q10. Can we take family holidays during term time?

NO. Family holidays must be taken during school holidays and NOT during term time. If you take your child out of school to go on holiday you will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Q11. What are exceptional circumstances?

An example of an exceptional circumstance is the death of a close family member. Please note that permission can only be granted for a very short period of time and you are required to request leave of absence PRIOR to booking any tickets or you will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice. You also need to provide evidence of the bereavement when your child returns to school.

Q12. What is a Fixed Penalty Notice?

A Fixed Penalty Notice is a fine issued by the Local Authority to parents who take their child on holiday, or out of school, during term time without the express consent of the

school. Such absences are referred to the Education Welfare Team who may impose a fixed penalty fine of £60 if paid within 21 days rising to £120 per parent for each child if paid within 28 days (Anti-social Behaviour Act 2006/2013).

If the notice remains unpaid after the 28th day, the Local Authority prosecutes the parent in the Magistrates' Court for the original non-attendance offence under The Education Act 1996, section 444, and not for non-payment of the penalty notice. If found guilty, parents will have a criminal record, possibly receive a fine of up to £1,000, for a first offence, and be required to pay costs to the Local Authority. **There is no right of appeal against a Fixed-Penalty Notice.**

Q13. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning to have breakfast before coming to school. Ensure that they leave home in school uniform and any items they need for the day eg homework, PE kit, swimming kit. Look in their school bags and communicate with your child's teachers. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education.

Q14. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact a member of staff immediately and discuss your concerns. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons:

- Difficulties with school work
- Bullying
- Friendship problems
- Family difficulties

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with the Education Welfare Officer. The Education Welfare Officer's name is Jenny Jones and she is based at:



**Education Welfare Team
Building 4
North London Business Park
Oakleigh Road South
N11 1NP
(Tel: 020 8359 7749)**