



West Croft School ATTENDANCE POLICY

Revised by Lisa Johnston March 2026
Agreed by Governors 17th March 2026

As a school we aim to:

- maintain an attendance rate of a *minimum* of 95.2%
- maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- reward and celebrate outstanding attendance

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance

Children who attend regularly:

- make better progress, both socially and academically
- find school routines and school learning easier to cope with
- find learning more satisfying
- have an easier transfer to the next phase of their education
- become part of the reward system, which recognises classes which have the highest percentage of attendance each week

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ringing us on 01237 473548 on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when your child will return. Parents should inform the school by telephone or email (admin@westcroft.devon.sch.uk) before 9.30am on the first day of absence
- arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks. This includes appointments for yourself and other family members which mean your child's school day will be affected.
- sending in a note explaining the reason for absence on your child's return to school after an illness. The class teacher will make initial enquiries regarding unexplained absences. Where no explanation is forthcoming, Admin staff will contact parents, involving the Head Teacher and Education Welfare Officer where necessary.
- keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness

We shall:

- follow up unexplained absences as soon as possible. If a reason has not been received by 9.30am on the first day of absence, school staff will contact parents by text message, email and/or phone call to ensure they are aware of their child's absence and to request a reason for their non-attendance. Verbal reasons given by the pupil or sibling in the same school will not be accepted
- remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters and the Parents' Information booklet.
- publish our attendance rate in the Parents' Information Booklet and on the School Website
- publish your child's attendance rate on his/her annual school report
- let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance
- if we continue to have concerns, make a referral to Education Welfare Officer, who visits the school regularly to review and support attendance matters

Escalation procedure for low attendance:

- First attendance concern letter sent home at 95% informing you that your child's attendance has fallen
- Second letter after 2 weeks if attendance continues to fall requesting further evidence to support authorisation of absences (for example medical evidence)
- Third letter after a further 2 weeks if attendance continues to fall. This will also invite you to a meeting with the inclusion team to discuss any support you can be given to improve your child's attendance
- Following this, referrals to the Education Welfare Officer will be made and may result in legal proceedings

Please refer to appendix

Authorised Absence

Absences will be authorised at the discretion of the Head Teacher or when parents provide supporting information.

We realise there are **rare** occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

Attendance and SEN

Being aware of the reason for absence or lateness of pupils with special educational needs is particularly important as there is a greater likelihood of the school needing to adapt its support in response to the reason for absence or lateness on the child's return to school. For example, a child who has been ill due to the effects of a change in medication or physiotherapy may need flexibility in the curriculum or timetable to accommodate their changed needs; without this information the school may not be able to provide the most appropriate support.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- waiting on a delivery
- going for a family day out
- sleeping in after a late night
- going shopping or for a hair cut
- because it is your child's birthday
- holidays
- where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory

Unexplained absences will be marked as unauthorised and these are reported to the Local Authority. The Education Welfare Service may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

Punctuality

- Morning registration is between 8.40am and 8.55 am. This is the time your child **must** be in the classroom, so you need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate by 8.50am at the latest.
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise learning for the rest of the day.
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their learning for the whole date may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only **late parents**.
- Afternoon registration is at 12.50pm
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DfES guidance. Registers will be closed at 9:10am and 1:05pm.
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of the school day will be referred to a place of safety if the school is not contacted by 3.30pm.

Lateness

In order to reduce the impact of lateness on learning, lateness will be recorded and monitored. If your child has a late arrival before the register has closed, they will receive a L code. If they are a late arrival after registration closed, they will receive a U code. A U code represents an unauthorised absence and as such will affect your child's overall attendance percentage. As a school we will look for patterns of lateness and if these become frequent we will send home a letter informing you of the lateness we have identified and invite you to make an appointment to discuss any difficulties you have with the class teacher or a member of the inclusion team.

Term Time Leave of Absence

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils' miss as a result of family holidays. There is no entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is allowed only at the discretion of the Head Teacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the Governing Body.

Our policy is as follows:

- requests for term holidays **will not** be authorised apart from in the most exceptional of circumstances. Where pupils are found to have taken an unauthorised holiday the school will request that the Education Welfare Service issue a Penalty Notice. All planned absences should be agreed in advance; the application should be made using a Request for Absence form in all cases (available from the School Office or downloadable from the school website).

- please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their learning. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the learning can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom.

Leavers

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6, parents are asked to:

- give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date when known, and reasons for moving.
- confirm the school has your current mobile phone number
- take our school's compliments slip so the new school can easily contact us and records be transferred
- let us know when you move

Children Missing Education

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information, and we cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services) the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child.

By giving us this information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

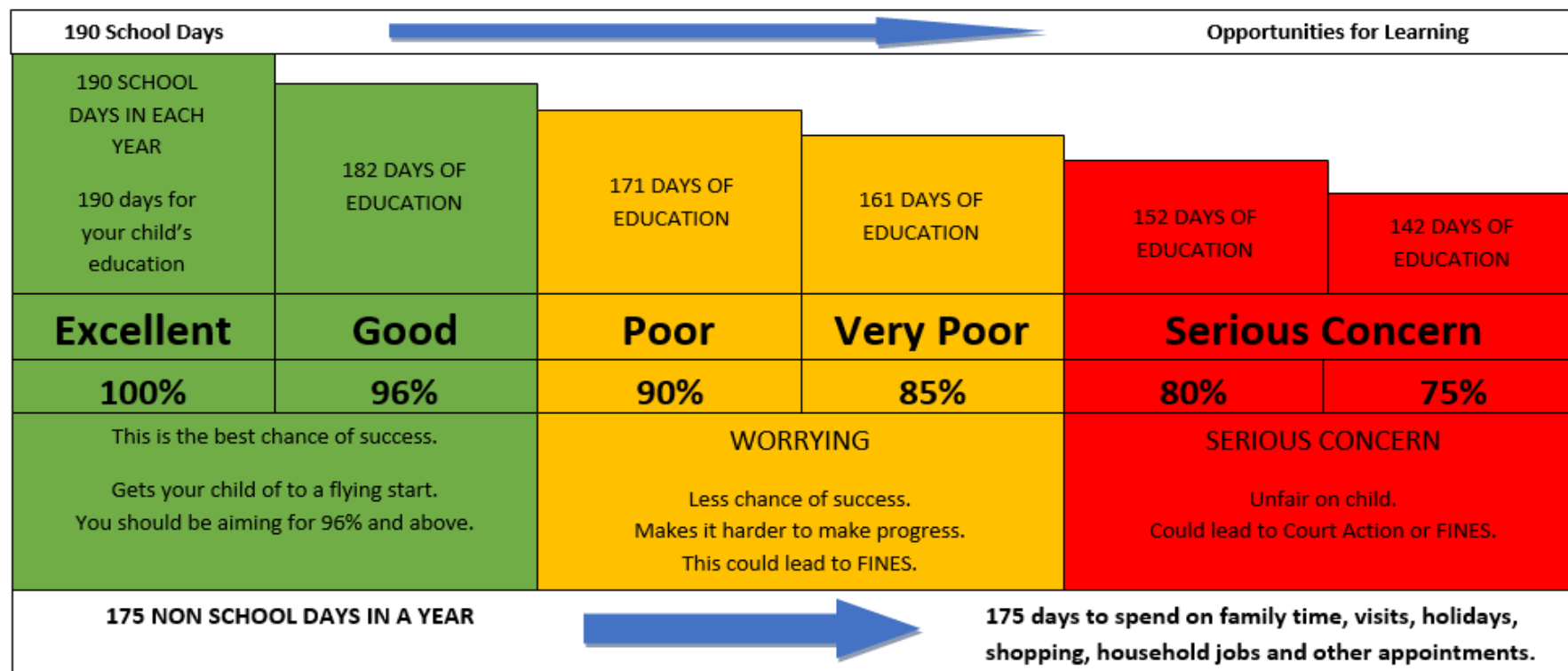
Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Authority. The Education Welfare Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a **Fixed Penalty** (fine) if unauthorised absences continue. There will be regular meetings with the EWO to monitor the attendance of those children falling below 95%, whatever the reason for absence. Action will be taken by the Devon LA against parents on behalf of the school where there is persistent poor attendance.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.



West Croft School School Absence



Unavoidable absences

Will be recorded as:

C - other authorised absence

E - excluded

I - illness

M - medical/dental appointment (where possible these appointments should be made for outside of school hours)

R - religious observation

Avoidable absences

Will be recorded as:

H - family holiday

G - family holiday (**NOT** agreed)

O - unauthorised absence