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| Policy Number: | SS10  | Originator: | Nigel Troop |
| Issue Number: | 3 | Authoriser: | Ben Coombes |
| Issue Date: | 01/09/2025 | Service Type: | Student Support |
| Next Review Due: | 31/08/2026 | Policy Location: | Wessex Lodge School Policy File |

**1: Aim of the policy:**

 Wessex Lodge School is committed to the principles stated in this policy document. We sincerely believe that all students benefit from the education we provide, and therefore from regular school attendance. In order to achieve this, we will take appropriate action to ensure that all students achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any barriers, which may impede full attendance, are addressed as quickly as possible. Understanding and addressing issues related to each student’s complex needs in order to support their school attendance will be a priority.

Wessex Lodge School recognises the importance of attendance in school and is fully aware of the correlation between high levels of attendance and attainment. Wessex Lodge School seeks to provide an environment and foster an ethos where high levels of attendance are the norm, while providing support and encouragement to improve, whenever high levels of attendance are not achieved.

Wessex Lodge School is committed to the ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda and fully recognises the impact that attendance has on the five outcomes of the agenda.

**Aims:**

Wessex Lodge School aims to ensure that:

• All students have an equal right and access to, an appropriate education that meets their needs as a learner with social emotional and mental health issues.

• No student will be deprived of their educational opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of other students.

**It is recognised that:**

• The majority of students want to attend school to learn, to engage with school staff and activities alongside their peers, and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society

• Some students may need to be supported and rewarded in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities

• It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure a child’s attendance at school as required by law (ref Section 7, 1996 Education Act) and Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

• It is the responsibility of education staff to ensure school is motivating and accessible to promote student attendance, personalised to each student’s need.

**2: Policy**

**EXPECTATIONS**

**Wessex Lodge School expects that all our students will:**

•Attend school regularly

• Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day

**Wessex Lodge School expects that parents and carers will:**

• Endeavour to arrange health appointments out of school hours wherever possible

• Inform a student’s teacher, Headteacher or Deputy-Headteacher of any reason or problem that may prevent a student from attending school

• Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure that students attend school

• Inform school, as soon as is practical and preferably early on the morning of absence, whenever a student is unable to attend school, on the first and each subsequent day

• Seek permission from the school for any leave of absence.

**Parents/Carers and students can expect the following from the school:**

• Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance

• Early contact with family or care staff when a student is absent without explanation

• Action on any attendance problem notified to the school

• Education staff supporting positive transitions from home to school as appropriate

• Referral of specific attendance issues to supporting agencies where appropriate

• Attendance figures published in each Student’s Annual Education Review Report

• Flexibility and understanding around a student’s attendance pattern where related to their health, Autism, SEMH and Complex Needs. Examples may include: an agreed amended start / end time to the day to support positive travel from home to school for a day student

• Education staff supporting a prolonged transition into school from home by working on personalised strategies with the student within the home-setting, this could include a bespoke curriculum focusing on the positives for the individual

• Accurate recording of arrival into / departure from school in order to inform planning and reporting in order to promote and sustain appropriate attendance / punctuality

.Support from our Family Liaison Officer -FLO.

**We encourage attendance by:**

• Consistent, clear communication with parents / carers and students about the importance of regular, attendance

• Setting targets for improved attendance if needed and sharing these with Local Authority Representatives, parents / carers and students

• The accurate completion of registers at the start of each session, and within 15 minutes of the start of each session.

• A coordinated Team-work approach from the Education Team, with the support of our Clinical Team, to promote full attendance from each student. The focus will be on meeting a student’s personalised needs as a learner with Complex Needs to ensure that they feel safe and motivated to attend school. This will include the clear use of visual supports for transitioning into school as appropriate to each student. Targets for attendance / punctuality / transition times may form part of the EHCP annual review if appropriate.

**The school will respond to non-attendance by:**

• For day students or following home-contact, by contacting parents / carers on the first day of an absence if no reason for absence has been received. (Contact will be by telephone or email)

• Where a pattern of non-attendance / transition problems is emerging a ‘Child Centred Planning’ multi-disciplinary Meeting will be convened and the parent / carer invited to visit school to work with school staff to help resolve the difficulties where appropriate.

• Where there is no response to school intervention and where the absence or pattern of absence has persisted without explanation, the school can refer to the placing Local Authority who support parents/carers with school attendance. This may result in legal action if non-attendance cannot be satisfactory resolved.

 **HOLIDAY ABSENCE**

The school acknowledges that from time to time some parents / carers will want to take their children out of school for holidays or special events. While we do not encourage this activity it is within the Head Teacher’s power to grant a reasonable amount of holiday leave (usually a maximum of 5 days) in any academic year. The school considers that these occasions should be kept to a minimum and that repeat requests within that same year will not be authorised.

On occasion, a request may be received for an extended period of absence over and above the usual 5-day holiday request. It is expected that these occasions would be exceptional and that the necessity for, and the timing and length of such leave will require careful consideration by the family and school.

In general, Wessex Lodge School will consider applications of 5 days or less in any one academic year, if prior attendance is in line with year targets, but will only authorise any longer periods of absence due to holiday in exceptional circumstances.

Requests for absence from school for religious observance will always be respected and supported.

**3. Equality Impact Statement**

All relevant persons are required to comply with this policy and must demonstrate sensitivity and competence in relation to diversity in race, faith, age, gender, disability and sexual orientation. If you, or any other groups, believe you are disadvantaged by this policy please contact the Regional Director. Acorn Education and Care will then actively respond to the enquiry.

This policy is written by Nigel Troop Date: 01/09/2025

Signed 

This policy is quality assured by Ben Coombes Head Teacher.

Signed:  

                                                                   Date: 01/09/2025