ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

Everyday Counts

July 2025

ATTENDANCE MATTERS
every student, every day

Important Information about attendance at WFA

We would like to say **a big thank you** to all our families at Wallscourt Farm Academy for supporting your children to attend school and engage so well with their learning. We know that this reflects the value our families place on children learning in school every day. We are looking forward to continuing to work together, to support best attendance and learning.

At Wallscourt Farm Academy, we want and expect our learners to attend school every day, unless they are really not well enough to, or there is another very good reason for their absence which is agreed by the academy.

We believe that children who attend regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education.

Attending on time every day also helps pupils form good habits which can stay with them throughout their education and on into the workplace.

The first day and week of term are very important in helping learners to settle into school and the school routine. **We know that children who attend every day during the first week of term are more likely to attend well over the year.** They are also better settled into the changes that happen in new terms, and therefore more readily able to access learning than those who miss out.

Thank you for your support in ensuring your child returns to school **on Wednesday 3rd September.**

Support for your child in school

Please remember that we are here to help in any way we can. If you have any concerns about your child that you wish to discuss with us, please do get in touch. If we cannot help directly, we will work with you to help you find other support.

You can contact us by phoning the Welcome Zone 0117 3709860 or emailing attendance@wfa.clf.uk

Arriving at school on time

Arriving at school on time is essential for your child's own learning, it encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any classroom disruption. Late arrival means learners risk missing important information which can seriously disadvantage them.

Pupils can arrive from 07:45am if they are booked into breakfast club or they can arrive from 08:30 when our gate opens.

- All learners are expected to arrive at school in good time for the start of the school day at 08:45am.
- If a learner arrives at school after 08:45am they will be marked in the register as late.

Staff may ask to meet with families of learners who arrive late to school, to discuss reasons for lateness and solutions.

Illness

Learners should attend school on every day the school is open, unless they are really not well enough.

Minor illness should not be a reason for staying at home. If your child attends school when feeling slightly under the weather, do let a member of staff know and we will monitor them and contact you if we think they need to go home. If you aren't sure whether to send your child to school, please contact the Welcome Zone and we will be happy to talk this through with you.

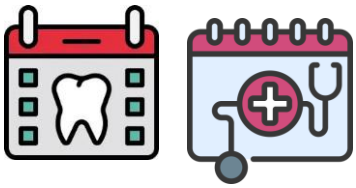
If your child is too ill to attend, you must contact the Welcome Zone before 9am on the first day of absence, to let us know. If your child is ill for more than one day, you will need to contact the academy on each morning of the absence, unless otherwise agreed.

To report an absence, contact the Welcome Zone on 0117 370 9860 or email attendance@wfa.clf.uk. If we are unable to take your call, please leave a message and a member of the team **will call you back** once they become available.

Please clearly explain the symptoms your child has, when the symptoms started, and when you expect your child to be well enough to return to school.

By law, schools must record all pupil absences and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Medical & Dental Appointments



Please try to avoid medical and dental appointments in school time. If this is unavoidable, arrange appointments so the minimum school time is lost. Unless it is an emergency appointment, families are expected to let the academy know about the appointment in advance, with evidence of the appointment. Your child should still attend school for as much of the school day as possible.

Absence follow up

Wallscourt Farm Academy will follow up any learner's absence where the family has not contacted us to explain why, or where we are unclear about the reason for absence.

If you don't tell us the reason for your child's absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where we have cause for concern about the actual reason for a learner's absence, staff may seek more information or evidence from families, and/or make a home visit to check the reason.

Unauthorised absences may result in a penalty notice or prosecution.

Important reminder about term time leave

Attending school every day helps children and young people maximise their learning and enjoy the benefits of their education. It really does make a difference.

For that reason, Wallscourt Farm Academy will not authorise any leave of absence in term time, unless satisfied the reason is exceptional.

We ask families to request permission in advance, and only **if absolutely necessary.** Any requests should be put in writing via the appropriate form (Leave of Absence request form available from the Welcome Zone) and wherever possible with at least four school weeks' notice. The parent or carer who the child normally lives with should make the application.

We also ask families not to make plans without discussing with the academy first, so that we can make good decisions together.

Family emergencies also need careful consideration. It may not always be appropriate, or in the best interests of the child, to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Wherever possible, please try to make alternative arrangements for your child so they can still attend school.

It is really important that we know where children are, as we have a duty to ensure they are safe. If we don't know why a child is absent, we will follow our safeguarding procedures.

Families are reminded that unauthorised term time leave may result in a penalty notice or prosecution.

To assist families in booking holidays and arranging other events, please find the term dates and inset days until July 2026 detailed at the end of this information sheet below. Our term date information can also be found on our website.

Legal action for unauthorised absence – including penalty notices

The government has made some changes to the penalty notices for unauthorised absence rules, which came into effect on19 August 2024.

If a child has at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 school weeks, their parent/s may receive a penalty notice. (A morning or afternoon is one session; a whole school day is two sessions.) However, the government's rules also allow for penalty notices to be issued for less unauthorised absence, in some circumstances, for example where parents appear to be avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events which the school has not authorised absence for.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent/carer with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with unauthorised absence. For example, if two siblings have unauthorised absence, and there are two parents/carers with responsibility for the children, four penalty notices would be issued.

Please note: Penalty notices are issued to parents and carers as an alternative to prosecution and are intended to prevent the need for court action. A penalty notice may not be issued if prosecution is considered a more appropriate sanction for a pupil's unauthorised absence.

The table below provides more information about penalty notices and other legal action for unauthorised absence.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absence	
Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution and are intended to prevent the need for court action. If a pupil has frequent unauthorised absence, and/or an extended period of unauthorised absence, a prosecution may be considered, instead of a penalty notice. Penalty notices cannot be paid in instalments.	
Sanction	Outcome
First penalty notice (in a 3-year rolling period)	The penalty is £80 (per parent/carer, per child) payable within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (If the fine is not paid, the parent/carer may be prosecuted for the child's unauthorised absence.)
Second penalty notice (in a 3-year rolling period)	The second time a penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child the amount will be £160 per parent, per child (if paid within 28 days). There is no reduction in the amount if the penalty is paid early. (Again, if the fine is not paid, the parent/carer may be prosecuted.)
Prosecutions for unauthorised absence	
Local authorities (LAs) are unable to issue more than two penalty notices to the same parent for the same child, in a rolling 3-year period. Should a third offence of unauthorised absence for the same child be committed during the 3 years (including where a child has moved school and fines have been issued by other LAs), the LA may prosecute the parent/carer(s). As penalty notices are an alternative to prosecution, the LA may decide to proceed straight to prosecution instead of issuing any penalty notice. If prosecuting, it is for the LA to decide whether a section 444(1) or section 444(1A) prosecution is most appropriate.	

Sanction	Outcome
Prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996	If found guilty, parents/carers may be fined up to £1000 and ordered to pay court costs. The court may also impose a Parenting Order.
Prosecution under section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996	If found guilty, parents/carers may be fined up to £2500 and ordered to pay court costs. Other court outcomes include community sentences, such as Curfew Orders, Unpaid Work (Community Payback) or a prison sentence of up to three months. The court may also impose a Parenting Order.
Education Supervision Orders (ESO)	
The local authority must consider applying for an ESO (under section 36 of the Children Act 1989) before prosecuting under s444 Education Act 1996. An LA may apply for an ESO instead of, or as well as, proceeding with a prosecution. The order is placed on the child, and a supervisor from the LA is appointed by the court, to give directions to the child and their parents with a view to securing that the child is properly educated. Parents can be prosecuted if they persistently fail to comply with a direction; if found guilty they may be fined up to £1000.	

Further Information

If you have any questions about the information provided, or any other attendance related questions, please contact the Welcome Zone and ask to speak to a member of the Attendance Team or email attendance@wfa.clf.uk

Term Dates

	First day of term for pupils:	Last day of term for pupils:	Inset Days/Bank Holidays
Term 1	Wed 3 Sept 2025	Wednesday 22 October 2025	• Monday 1 September 2025 • Tuesday 2 September 2025 • Thursday 23 October 2025 • Friday 24 October 2025
Term 2	Monday 3 November 2025	Friday 19 December 2025	None
Term 3	Tuesday 6 January 2026	Friday 13 February 2026	Monday 5 January 2026
Term 4	Tuesday 24 February 2026	Thursday 2 April 2026	Monday 23 February 2026 Friday 13 March 2026
Term 5	Monday 20 April 2026	Friday 22 May 2026	Monday 4 May (Bank Holiday)
Term 6	Monday 1 June 2026	Tuesday 21 July 2026	Friday 3 July 2026