

8th September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

As a school, we expect all students to attend every day and to strive for excellent attendance, unless there is a legitimate reason or exceptional circumstance. At our school, we expect all students to maintain a **minimum attendance of 96%**, and we actively encourage students to aim even higher wherever possible.

Our curriculum is carefully sequenced so that each lesson builds on prior knowledge, helping students develop their understanding step by step. When lessons are missed, it can make it more challenging for students to keep up and fully engage with new learning. Every lesson attended helps build strong attendance and develop healthy habits.

We also know there is a strong link between regular attendance and academic success. Students who attend consistently — particularly those with attendance above 96%, are much more likely to achieve higher outcomes at GCSE. Here is the link to a recent DfE study that found that students with 95% or above attendance almost doubled their chances of achieving a grade 5 or above in Maths and English [95%+ attendance almost doubles odds of GCSE pass](#).

The table below illustrates the impact of poor attendance and how many days this equates to over an academic year. Even if your child ended the year on 95%, they would have still been absent for 10 days.

100%	0 days
97%	6 days
95%	10 days
92%	15 days
90% (DfE persistent absent threshold)	19 days
85%	29 days
80%	38 days
75%	48 days
70%	57 days
65%	67 days
60%	76 days

We understand that students may occasionally feel unwell; however, unless they are genuinely too ill to attend or have been advised by a medical professional to stay at home, we encourage attendance.

Here is a list of general tips for **excellent attendance** to consider:

- Your child should attend whenever possible — even part days make a difference
- Check NHS guidance before keeping your child off - [NHS guidance sheet](#)
- Do **not** keep your child off for minor illnesses (e.g. headache, cough, cold)
- Send your child in if unsure — we have a team of medical staff who can support them
- If your child is unwell in the morning, consider a later start
- Avoid medical appointments during the school day – if they do need to attend one ensure they come into school before or after their appointment
- Avoid booking holidays during term time
- Ensure your child arrives on time as this can lead to poor attendance

Throughout the year, you will receive updates on your child's attendance through termly progress checks and reports. Where students achieve excellent attendance (96% and above), we will celebrate this with a postcard home. If your child's attendance falls below expected levels, particularly where it reaches 90% or below, we will contact you to offer support and raise concerns. We will be in touch as soon as your child has had more than one absence, usually via text. Once your child has had more than 6 days off from school, we may be in touch via letter or a call to discuss this. If your child's attendance falls below 90%, we may not be able to authorise absences of any type.

Attendance reminders

Term-time holidays

We are required by the Department for Education to consider issuing a penalty notice where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more within a rolling 10-week period. In practice, this means that a one-week holiday during term time may meet this threshold.

As a school, we aim to work positively with families and will consider each request on a case-by-case basis. However, holidays will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Where there are concerns about a child's overall attendance (for example, below 90% with limited improvement), or where multiple holidays are taken within an academic year, we may request that the Local Authority issue a penalty notice. For further guidance in our attendance policy, please visit: [Whitley Bay High School - Policies](#)

Medical and other appointments

We kindly ask that, wherever possible, medical and other appointments are arranged outside of the school day to minimise disruption to learning.

Please be aware that, in line with DfE guidance, if a student attends a morning appointment and arrives after 9.15am (when registers have closed), they must be marked with an authorised absence code (M) for the entire morning. This will negatively affect their attendance figure. Where possible, we advise booking appointments later in the day, or allowing students to attend school first for registration before leaving.



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If a student arrives late without a valid reason, they will receive a 'U' code, which counts as an unauthorised absence. Persistent lateness can also lead to further action, including penalty notices, as it has a significant impact on attendance.

We hope this information is helpful and provides reassurance. We value working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure every child feels confident, supported and ready to attend school each day. Where a student faces challenges affecting their attendance, we are committed to offering support and will work closely with families to find practical solutions.

If you wish to discuss any attendance concerns, please contact your child's tutor or Head of Year in the first instance.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Wilson', is placed below the 'Yours faithfully' text.

Steve Wilson
Headteacher