

Wanstead High School

Education with Character

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Headteacher: Miss E Hillman

8th September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope this letter finds you well.

It has been wonderful to welcome back our existing pupils and to meet our new cohorts in Year 7 and Year 12. As we settle into the new school year, I would like to take a moment to highlight some of our existing attendance and absence procedures, and introduce some new initiatives around detentions, attendance and punctuality that we would greatly appreciate your support with.

Reporting Absence Procedures

Our whole-school attendance at the end of Week 1 was just over 93%, which is lower than we had hoped. Disappointingly, of the nearly 7% of pupils who were absent, over half of these absences were unexplained and unauthorised.

We kindly ask that parents and carers inform the school of any pupil absence by 8:00am, or as early as possible, using either the school absence line or the school email address. This should be done on each day of absence. Following up on unexplained absences takes valuable time away from our attendance team, who are focused on supporting pupils facing genuine barriers to attending school.

While we understand that you will make the final decision about whether your child is well enough to attend school, the NHS has produced helpful guidance on minor illnesses and school attendance. This guidance is available on the Attendance page of our school website.

Please note: if a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, they are considered persistently absent. In cases where absences are frequent but sporadic, we will require medical evidence before authorising further absences.

If your child is going to be very late, please let us know. Pupils arriving after the register closes at 9:10am will be marked with a U code, which equates to half a day's absence.

The Importance of Regular Attendance

Research and school data consistently show that pupils with attendance rates of 95% or above are significantly more likely to achieve strong academic outcomes. Regular attendance supports classroom learning, fosters relationships with peers and staff, and builds habits that contribute to long-term success.

We recognise that for a small number of pupils, attending school daily can be challenging due to chronic medical conditions or mental health concerns. If your child is struggling to attend school, please reach out—we are here to help.

Last academic year, our whole-school attendance was 92%, broadly in line with the national average. However, when compared to similar schools demographically, it is clear that we should be aiming for 94% or higher.

This year, we will be communicating more regularly with pupils, parents/carers, and staff about the importance of attendance. We are also introducing attendance challenges at key points in the year when attendance typically dips. We aim to recognise and reward regular attendance, improved attendance, and the resilience of pupils who attend school despite health challenges. Please follow us on social media and keep an eye out for these initiatives so you can support and encourage your child.



Punctuality to Lessons

Last year, we saw an increase in pupils wilfully arriving late to lessons without valid reasons. To address this, we are introducing a centralised system starting Monday 8th September.

Under this system, if a pupil is late to lessons three times between Friday of one week and Thursday of the next, they will be placed in a late detention on Friday from 3:15–4:15pm. Parents/carers will be notified via the Edu Link One app. Frequent lateness—five or more times in a week—will result in an internal exclusion, and we will arrange a meeting with parents/carers to discuss the issue. Although this may seem punitive and we do not wish pupils to miss out on learning within their timetabled lessons, when pupils persistently arrive late to lesson, this causes significant disruption; to their own learning and also the learning of their peers,

The consequence for persistent lateness is reflective of the importance that we place on allowing our pupils to learn in disruption free classes.

To support pupils, we have updated our bell system to clearly signal the start and end of lessons and transitions, adequate time has been allocated for movement across the school site. The systems ensure there is no ambiguity about lateness.

Centralised Detentions: Behaviour and Lates

To support staff workload and wellbeing, parents and carers will now be informed about any detentions by a notification to their Edu Link App rather than via a phone call or email from the staff member. Please do check your Edu Link App messages daily for all school communications.

If you would like to discuss the incident that led to the detention, then please use the school email address whs@Wansteadhigh.co.uk to request a communication from the staff member. Please include in the email subject – Centralised Detention and the name of the staff member you wish to speak to and the subject that they teach.

Thank you for your support.

Warm regards

Mrs H Martin
Deputy Headteacher