

Attendance Policy

2016-2017

INTRODUCTION

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent inform the school of the reasons for absence.

Every Day Counts
Attending school every day = 100% attendance.
Attending 4.5 days each week = 90% attendance = missing four whole weeks of school in one year.
Attending 4 days each week = 80% attendance = missing more than half a term per year or two full years missed over the course of their school career.
Attending 3.5 days each week = 70% attendance = missing more than a quarter of a school year.
The link between attendance and attainment in school is clear. The more a child is in school the more they increase their opportunity to fulfil their potential.

WHY?

- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools EAB, Local Authority (LA), Delta Academies Trust and the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:
 - Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
 - Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.
- Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

- Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold are not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription/medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost).
- There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, as does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.
- The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, the school with its EAB and the Local Authority.

AIM OF THE POLICY

To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- Meet the Government attendance targets set for us (96.5%).
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days.
- This Policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with a first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- To promote good attendance.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day.
- To inform school on **every** day of any absence.
- To work with the school to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

- If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should: talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving.
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The school Attendance Officer will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss with the Head of Academy. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

Stage 1: Verbal communication with parents outlining concerns.

Stage 2: Initial letter to parents.

Stage 3: Invitation to meeting in school.

Stage 4: Formal proceedings towards prosecution.

ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

It is the policy of Willow Green Academy not to authorise any absence other than illness. Unauthorised absences may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

- There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

As a rule Willow Green Academy will not authorise any holiday taken during term time.

Willow Green Academy defines exceptional circumstances as:

- Being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.
- Examples of which could be:
- A parent or grandparent is seriously/terminally ill and the time away from school proposed is likely to be the last as such.
- There has been a death or other significant trauma in the family of a close relative and it is felt that an immediate break from school life might help the child concerned better deal with the situation.
- Children of parents who are in the armed forces and are restricted as to when they can take leave.

Please note this list is not exhaustive

LATENESS

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.

- Children must be in class and ready to learn by 9.00am each day, the doors will open for children to enter at 8.45am. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will be registered by the office staff.
- Lateness will be closely monitored.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'.
- Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school to discuss the problem with the Attendance Officer.

SICKNESS

- Please notify the school on each day of the absence.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

We celebrate good attendance throughout our School by:

- Weekly assembly to promote attendance with:
- Awards for classes with 100% attendance each week.
- Awards for classes with 100% punctuality each week.
- Termly 100% certificates (individual pupil).
- Yearly 100% certificate (individual pupil).

THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

The Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence."

The Education Welfare Service, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice when requested by a Headteacher/Head of Academy/Principal can be issued as long as the following criteria apply:

- At least 10 sessions (equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current school term, or 20 sessions (ten school days) in the previous 4 months.
- Other than in specific circumstances, the parent will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given 15 school days to affect improvement. Within the 15 day period, further unauthorised absence will trigger the issue of a notice without warning.
- No more than two Penalty Notices will be issued per pupil per academic year.
- In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority reserves the right to:
 - issue a Penalty Notice for a first offence
 - issue a Penalty Notice without warning

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

Position Statement – national definition of children who are not receiving a suitable education:

“A compulsory school age child who is not on the roll of a school, not placed in alternative provision by a local authority, and who is not receiving a suitable education at home” (Revised statutory guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education January 2009).

Wakefield Council’s Children Missing from Education protocol is designed to support professionals across all partners and stakeholders in their combined efforts to safeguard children who are missing from education. Its aim is to identify the practical steps to be taken by professionals to locate and track children and young people missing from education. **Please refer to the Council’s Protocols.**

<http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-children/supporting-families/education-welfare-service/children-missing-education>