

Willow Green Academy

Attendance Policy 2024/25

AIMS 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.
- 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 and home visits for vulnerable children or children who have not 'checked in' with the Academy.
- Unannounced visits may also take place for children with 3 day plus absences.
- If home visits are undertaken and there is no answer at the home address a postcard will be posted through the door stating that school has tried to visit. Additional services will be contacted if the child is deemed to be vulnerable.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences (see Appendix 1).
- 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.
- Where there are concerns around attendance staff will log this and alert the member of staff responsible for attendance.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- To have children in class ready for teaching between 8:40am and 8:45 am.
- To inform school 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 and teacher; it may be something simple that could need your help in resolving.
- To avoid holidays being taken in term time.

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: Written communication with parents outlining concerns

Stage 2: Written communication with parents outlining continuing concerns

Stage 3: Invitation to meeting in school - agreed plan in place with a monthly review

Stage 4: Fines by Wakefield Council

Stage 5: Formal proceedings towards prosecution

ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME

There are approximately 190 school days (380 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.

It is the policy of Willow Green Academy not to authorise any absence other than proven illness or certain exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised absences may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued; a separate notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

If a child has a planned absence, parents/carers must complete the Leave of Absence Form (Appendix 2). The Head of the Academy will consider whether the absence falls under exceptional circumstances or not before authorising the absence. If no planned absence form is completed, the absence will automatically be unauthorised.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PENALTY NOTICES, IMPLEMENTATION - 19TH AUGUST 2024.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS PENALTY NOTICES WILL BE ISSUED FOR:

Term Time Leave: Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for Term Time Leave of 10 sessions or more* (consecutive or accumulative)

10 Sessions of Unauthorised Absence in a 10 Week Period: A Penalty Notice may be considered/issued when a pupil has had 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10week (school weeks) period.

**There are 2 sessions per school day.*

PENALTY NOTICE CAN BE ISSUED PER PARENT/PER CHILD:

Penalty Notice Fines are issued per parent** per child.

For example: 3 Siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

*** A parent includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996.*

FIRST OFFENCE

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a Term Time Holiday or Irregular School Attendance the Penalty Notice will be charged at: £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of issue, reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days**.

SECOND OFFENCE (within 3 years of the First Offence Penalty Notice)

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second Penalty Notice will be charged at: £160 if paid within 28 days (no reduced fee for paying early).

*(**Unpaid Penalty Notice's after 28 days may result in a parental prosecution)*

THIRD OFFENCE (within 3 years of the First Offence Penalty Notice)

On the third time that an offence is committed for either a Term Time Holiday and / or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, the case may proceed straight to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000. *(Please note that where a penalty notice is not suitable cases can proceed straight to parental prosecution)*

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 can be issued as long as the following criteria apply:

10 Sessions of Unauthorised Absence in a 10 Week Period: A Penalty Notice may be considered/issued when a pupil has had 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week (school weeks) period.

The Academy will always pursue enforcement when a child has reached the triggers for penalty fines and/or prosecution.

The Academy reserves the right to either pursue enforcement through either Penalty Notices or prosecution. There is no set order for enforcement.

LATENESS

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

- 08:40am each day; the doors will open for children to enter at 08.40am. Registers will be taken at 08:50am.
- Our registers remain open for 30 minutes, to allow changes for those who are late.
- If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed, the pupil will be automatically marked with a 'U' **This equates to an absence**, although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. However, evidence of the appointment **must** be shown. Please be advised that wherever possible doctors and dentists' appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays. If a pupil has a medical appointment that is not until late morning, we encourage that they come to school for their morning mark before attending the appointment.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be monitored and invited to the Academy 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:

- Children who achieve 100% attendance in any single week will receive an attendance raffle ticket which will be put into the end of year prize draw
- Children who achieve 100% attendance for a term will receive a special termly award.
- Children who achieve 100% attendance for the whole academic year will receive a certificate and special recognition reward.

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 Children Missing from Education protocol is designed to support professionals across CYPS, 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 City Council's Protocols.

APPENDIX 1

PROCESS AND PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE: WILLOW GREEN ACADEMY

This appendix should be read in conjunction with the Willow Green Attendance Policy 2024/25.

Willow Green Academy are committed to supporting parents and families to ensure high levels of attendance. In line with our attendance policy, we follow a process of routine and continual monitoring of pupils' attendance and the support of families to improve and maintain good levels of attendance.

THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Instances of absence and lateness will be logged daily and monitored by the Attendance Officer and the Head of Academy.

This monitoring process will involve the review of:

- Pupils whose attendance for the past week is 95% or below
- Pupils whose cumulative attendance for the year is below 95%
- Pupils whose attendance is below 90%. These pupils are deemed persistently absent (PA)
- Pupils whose attendance patterns indicate they are at risk of PA
- Pupils who have previously been classed as PA or have been monitored for attendance
- Pupils who are consistently late to school

WHERE CONCERNS ARISE OR ISSUES PERSIST THE FOLLOWING WILL BE INITIATED:

1. Informal action: monitoring letter to parents detailing pupils' current attendance patterns and reason for monitoring. Parents of any pupils with attendance below 95% will automatically receive a monitoring letter.
2. Formal action: invitation to an attendance review meeting with Head of Academy and the Academy attendance officer. These meetings will be requested for parents of pupils who:
 - Have previously received a monitoring letter and show no improvements in attendance.
 - Pupils who are deemed PA (Persistently absent) attendance below 90%.
 - Pupils with patterns of attendance which cause concern and who are deemed at risk of becoming PA.

During attendance review meetings, the Academy will speak with parents, discuss attendance patterns and offer any necessary support.

At the initial meeting the Academy will carry out a '**Listening and understanding**' summary which will take the views of parents, the children and the school. They will use this to help them formulate an 'Early intervention plan'.

Where pupils attendance is below 90% (Persistently absent, PA) or in instances where an Early Intervention plan hasn't been successful, a comprehensive attendance support plan will be created. This may involve other agencies: Academy AAB members, Early help, Local Authority, Social Care etc.

Early intervention plans and attendance support plans will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

ABSENCES

The Academy will usually authorise absences for pupil illness. However, where attendance is a concern, the decision may be made not to authorise illnesses without medical evidence.

Pupils who are classed as persistently absent (below 90%) **will not** have illnesses authorised without medical evidence.

As per the Attendance Policy, parents of children with ten or more sessions of unauthorised absence (10 session = 5 days) could be issued with a Fixed Penalty notice of £80 per parent per child in line with Local Authority Code Policy and Procedure.

APPENDIX 2

Application for Leave of Absence

You should not normally take your child on holiday in term time. It can be disruptive to both the child’s learning and to the school. The Academy is only able to consider holidays in term time where both:

- The application is made to the Head of Academy in advance of the holiday by a parent the child normally lives with; and
- There are exceptional circumstances.

Applications should be made as far in advance of the holiday as possible and you should speak to the Class Teacher before you book.

Willow Green Academy will not grant permission for leave of absence for holidays during term time. Families can expect to receive a Penalty Notice if they choose to take children out of school without permission from the Head of Academy. The penalty is currently £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of issue, reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days. This is explained in more detail overleaf.

However, if you feel that there are exceptional circumstances around the holiday request, please submit your reasons in writing

| Name of child/ren | Class | Dates from and to | Reason for Leave of Absence Request |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Total number of days not including weekends/holidays/Inset days:

Parent/Carer Signature:

Date:

For Office Use Only

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Attendance Year to date: | |
| Authorised Year to date: | |
| Unauthorised Year to date: | |
| Absence Classed as: | |
| Head of Academy’s Signature: | |
| Date: | |
| Copy to Parent/Carer: | |