



Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age, attend school regularly and we will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance](#) document from the Department for Education (DfE). This document is drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher will report this information to the governors, at each meeting. They will look at reviewing and challenging attendance data, monitoring attendance figures for the whole school, discussion of any current Attendance Action Plans and holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school and leading positive attendance strategies across the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- Arranging calls with parents to discuss attendance issues by building relationships with the parents to support them in tackling poor attendance.
- Taking calls from parents about absences.
- Reporting attendance to Welfare Call and Virtual Schools in response to Looked After Children in the school.
- Delivering target intervention/Attendance Action Plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers (and social workers where necessary).

3.3 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily using Arbor, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the Administration Team.

3.4 Administration Team

The administration team are responsible for daily absence monitoring and follow up procedures:

- Within 30 minutes of registers closing the team should be checking registers and following up on any absences by contacting parents.
- Any attendance concerns should be recorded on CPOMS and reported to DSLs.
- Where contact can not be made with parent/carers absence calls should continue at regular intervals throughout the day.
- On day 2 of no contact, DSLs should be informed and a home visit considered.
- Attendance should be monitored regularly and SLT notified of any pupils who drop below 95% attendance so further supportive actions can be considered.
- At the beginning of each half term parents should be sent an attendance certificate for the previous term notifying them of their child's current attendance profile.

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

The school will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

The school will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and again at the start of the first session after the lunch break. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present.
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- Absent.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- Unwell
- Attending a medical appointment.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry.
- The amended entry.
- The reason for the amendment.
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00 am and will be kept open until 9.15 am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00 pm.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30 am or as soon as practically possible.

They should call the school on 01522 453910 or send an email to thewillows@rests-sen.uk. If an email is sent rather than a phone call a member of the Administration Team will call the parent/carer back on the same day to clarify the absence reasons.

The school will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, in which case evidence will be requested.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, or the absence is for longer than 5 school days, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate documentation. The school will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this.

4.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as an authorised absence if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

This should be done as soon as the appointment is made, or as soon before the appointment as possible in writing either via email or by hand.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence by submitting a completed Pupil Absence Request Form.

See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (9.15am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L).
- After the register has closed (9.15am onwards) the pupil will be marked as having an unauthorised absence, using the appropriate code (U).

For persistent lateness, the Headteacher will liaise with parents/carers to see how the school can support families with this.

We understand that sometimes punctuality can be linked to transport issues - in these instances the school will liaise with the Local Authority Transport Department to find a solution.

4.5 Following up Absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school Administration Team will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason. This may result in parents/carers being invited to a meeting or a home visit taking place if this is deemed necessary.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.

4.6 Reporting to Parents

We report children's attendance to parents/carers at the end of each half term and at the end of the academic year as part of a child's end of year report.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

5.1 Approval for Term-Time Absences

Request for absence must be submitted to the school by a parent/carer completing a Pupil Absence Request Form.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as - on balance based if the case presented to the Headteacher determines that the absence supports the mental, emotional or physical wellbeing of the pupil.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for requesting an **authorised absences** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail).
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- Flexi-schooling requests in circumstances where this is deemed appropriate by the Headteacher a pupil may be placed on a part time timetable. This would be in exceptional circumstances and would be documented in detail and reviewed at least every 6 weeks.
- Exceptional family events, considered on a case-by-case basis.

5.2 Legal Sanctions

The school and local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices are issued by the Local Authority.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling 10-week period and/or full academic year.
- The reason and duration of the unauthorised absence.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority will decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Phone calls are made home on the first day of absence and every day afterwards. In the instance of non-contact or persistent absence, home visits and meetings with parents/carers will be arranged.

We will communicate early about attendance issues acknowledging positive improvements by communications home.

Initiatives to reward high attendance and improvements in attendance will be awarded throughout the academic year.

7. Attendance Monitoring

The Administration Team will monitor attendance daily and report any concerns to the Headteacher and senior leadership team.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health, and each day afterwards until they can return to school. (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for absence in more detail.

If a pupil's absence continues to increase after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10% (which equates to 15 days of absence across an academic year). If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

The severe absence threshold is 50%. If a pupils individual overall absence rate is less or equal to 50% the pupil will be classified as a severe absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and scrutinised by the Headteacher. Welfare Call collect data daily and/or weekly for our Looked After Children.

8. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Executive Board.

9. Links to other Policies

This document will be considered in conjunction with the following other policies:

- Adverse Weather Policy.
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Children Missing from Education Policy.
- Children with Health Needs Who Can Not Attend School Policy.
- Equality in Schools Policy.
- Exclusion Policy.
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

Appendix 1: Pupil Absence Request Form

Pupil Leave of Absence Request Form

To make an application for your child to be absent from school during term time, for exceptional circumstances please complete and return this form to the school office at your earliest convenience.

PUPIL DETAILS	
Name of Pupil:	
Class:	
PARENT/CARER DETAILS	
Name of Parent/Carer:	
Relationship to Child:	
Address:	
Telephone No:	
Email Address:	
ABSENCE DETAILS	
First Day of Absence:	
Last Day of Absence:	
Total No. of Days Absent:	
Reason for Request: (please provide evidence)	
Signature of Parent/Carer:	
Date:	
SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Current Attendance (%):	
Last Academic Year Attendance (%):	
Decision:	Authorised ☐ Unauthorised ☐
Headteacher Signature:	
Date:	
Date Decision Communicated to Parent/Carer:	

Appendix 2: Example Communications to Parents/Carers

General Message Regarding the Importance of Attendance

Dear Parent/Carer of {Pupil Name}

We need your help, please.

{Pupil Name} has been absent for {#} days of school, which is equal to {#} lessons missed so far this school year.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell - and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance *Is my child too ill for school?* - NHS (www.nhs.uk) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We also know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At The Willows School we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We also know that you can have a significant effect on {Pupil Name}'s absences this academic year and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that {Pupil Name} comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes. We want to work with you to achieve this – please call or come in and meet {Pupil Name}'s Class Teacher if there is anything we can do to support you or your child. We appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

We will be in touch again to request a meeting with you if we have ongoing concerns about your child's attendance.

Kind Regards

The Willows School

Newsletter Content to Showcase Attendance Expectations

What YOU must do:

- Try to telephone the school before 8.30am each day of your child's absence.
- Tell the school in advance, of any medical appointments and bring in appointment cards/letters.
- If you are not sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, send them in anyway as they often perk up on arrival.

- Have a backup plan for if your child misses transport, call on a family member, neighbour or friend.
- If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance then talk to us as a first step so we can help!

What WE will do:

- Check your child's attendance every day.
- Phone home to discuss your child's attendance with you.
- Invite you into school for attendance meetings if we are concerned.
- If we cannot establish a reason for absence, then we may make a welfare home visit.

Absence Due to Lateness

Dear Parent/Carer of {Pupil Name}

We have noticed that {Pupil Name} is often absent in the mornings.

We know that mornings can be difficult for some pupils, and we are keen to help to improve {Pupil Name}'s attendance.

We would love to talk to you to discuss avenues for support to help {Pupil Name} attend school well. Please contact the school office to make an appointment with your child's Class Teacher or arrange a phone call.

Kind Regards

The Willows School

General Absence Message

{Pupil Name} has not arrived at school this morning, please contact school at your earliest convenience to confirm the reasons for absence.

If we do not receive contact from a parent/carers regarding your child's absence a home visit will be organised.

Kind Regards

The Willows School

Appendix 3: Attendance Codes

Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
/	Present (am)	Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as attending for statistical purposes.
\	Present (pm)	Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as attending for statistical purposes.
L	Late arrival (before 9.15 am)	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrived before the register is closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be recorded as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes. If a pupil is recorded with code N but arrives later in the session after the register has closed, the attendance register must be amended to record them as absent using code U or another absence code that is more appropriate.
U	Late arrival (after 9.15am)	Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.
K	Attending Educational Provision Arranged by the Local Authority	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a

		registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site). A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead.
V	Attending an Educational Visit or Trip	The pupil is attending a place other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff. The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded.
P	Participating in a Sporting Activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded.
W	Attending Work Experience	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the school as part of the pupil's education. The work experience must take place during the session for which it is recorded.
B	Attending any other Approved Educational Activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience. The educational activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded (school is still responsible for overall safeguarding of the child).

C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can only do so in specific circumstances.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.	Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, they should get the school's agreement in advance, and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.	Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant leave of absence, under regulation 11(4), where an application has been made in advance by the parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence) and the leave is to enable the pupil to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination.	Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant leave of absence, under regulation 11(5), for a pupil to study for a public examination where the leave has been agreed in advance with a parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence).
X	Non-compulsory school age pupils are not required to attend school.	Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority

		can grant a leave of absence, under regulation 11(7) or (8) for a pupil not of compulsory school age to attend school part-time.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.	All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs in line with paragraphs 65 – 70.
D	Dual registered at another school.	The law allows a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis.
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	All schools can grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence should not, and from a school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority, must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child, and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.
R	Religious observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body

		the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves). As a rule, 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' is a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to record the occasion. If in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school on disciplinary grounds, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education.
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Code Q is only used where a pupil is absent because the local authority has a legal duty to arrange home-to-school travel for the pupil and they have not done so, or because the pupil has no choice but to attend a school that does not qualify for such travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available.

Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency.
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use, and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in that part of the premises that remain in use.
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed	Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be recorded with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed.
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are: • in police detention. • remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing. • detained under a sentence of detention.
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	The pupil is well enough to attend (otherwise Code I would have been recorded) but there are Government rules or guidance to limit the spread of infection or disease which say they should not attend.
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school.
G	Holiday not granted by the school	The school has not granted a leave of absence, and the pupil is

		absent for the purpose of a holiday.
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has not yet been established before the register closes, the absence must be recorded with code N. Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session (regulation 10(7) to (9)). Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O.
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens.
#	Planned whole school closure	Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance such as: • days between terms. • half terms. • occasional days (for example, bank holidays).

		• weekends (where it is required by the management information system). • up to 5 non-educational days. • use of the whole school as a polling station.
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