

# Windlesham Village Infant School

## Attendance Policy



*Last reviewed: September 2023 (Statutory Framework review annually)*

*Next Review: September 2024*

### **Commitment to Attendance**

We are committed to encouraging and supporting parents in ensuring their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

### **Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2022'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

### **Expectations**

All pupils are expected to attend 100% of the time, unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff are expected to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Class teachers are responsible for providing pastoral support to address attendance issues.

### ***Headteacher***

- Monitors and reviews the attendance procedures and works with Local Authority Inclusion Officer to ensure reasons for absence are identified and interventions are put in place.
- Regularly meets with Local Authority Inclusion Officer to identify and action any attendance concerns.
- Work with families to resolve attendance issues.
- Identifies and monitors attendance of Persistent Absence (PA) pupils.
- Monitors information and data on school attendance.
- Promotes the attendance policy within the school and ensures that it is implemented effectively.

### ***Administrators***

- Ensure morning and afternoon registers are taken and are up to date at 8:50am and 13:05pm.
- Contact parents and request reasons for absence by 9.30am.
- Collate daily attendance records and, together with the Headteacher, put in place agreed procedures to monitor and respond to poor attendance and punctuality.

### ***The Governing Body***

- Monitors and reviews the attendance policy on an annual basis.
- Agrees absence targets on an annual basis.
- Plays an active role in ensuring targets are met.

### ***Children***

- Must attend school regularly.
- Be prepared for the day.

### ***Parents/Carers***

- Must perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- Ensure their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- Ensure they contact the school on the first day of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

## **Pupils Leaving During the School Day**

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.
- Pupils must report to the school office when leaving/returning from the school, where their absence is recorded.

## **Categorisation of Absence**

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories:

### ***Unauthorised absence***

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have not been fully explained
- Recreational trips
- Holidays which are not deemed to be “exceptional circumstances”
- Excessive illness without medical evidence

### ***Authorised absence***

This is for pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

### ***Approved Educational Activity***

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance return purposes. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Induction visits
- Most types of dual registration

## **Performances and activities, including paid work**

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school’s absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

### **Religious observance**

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

### **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence**

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

### **SEND- and health-related absences**

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the Local Authority (LA) if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there have been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

### **Registration and Lateness – *punctuality is an important life skill***

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register. School opens at 8.30 a.m. and begins at 8.40 a.m; all pupils are expected to be in school for registration by this time. Registers are taken in the morning by 8.50 a.m. and in the afternoon by 1.05 p.m. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. It is paramount therefore that all students arrive at school on time.

Any student who arrives within this period will be marked present. Children arriving after 8.40am will be marked as present but late, provided they arrive before 9.00am (this will not affect their attendance). If children arrive after 9.00 a.m. it will be recorded as unauthorised for the morning session unless a good reason can be provided e.g. accident in the area bringing traffic to a standstill. In cases where the absence at registration was for attending a medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

### **First Day of Absence**

If a child is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school on the day. However, if the child is absent and no reason has been provided, the school will telephone the parent to enquire about the child. School will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. A message will be left where no contact can be made.

### **Frequent Absence**

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Local Authority Inclusion Officer meets with the Headteacher each term to discuss attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent by:

- Phone call to parent by Headteacher to discuss concerns; invitation to meet with Headteacher.
- This will be followed up with a confirmation letter.
- If this is unsuccessful the school will refer the family to Local Authority Inclusion Officer.

### **Persistent Absence (PA)**

A pupil will be considered to be persistently absent if he/she is away for over 10% of school sessions in an academic year. Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Pupils with Persistent Absence are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Parents will be notified by letter regarding the level of their child's absence if their child becomes a persistent absentee and will be invited to a meeting where an action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

## Child Missing/Leaving our school

1. Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher immediately be informed
2. Search indoor and outdoor areas within the school grounds in case the child is hiding.
3. Immediate surrounding areas outside the School grounds (the exit routes) should also be searched. Staff should have mobile phones with them.
4. If located, keep an eye on the child and try to engage calmly: **DO NOT CHASE.**
5. Member of staff informs parents.
6. If the child is not located, inform the police (999).

## Leave of absence

The school holiday dates, external exam dates and INSET days are published a year in advance. Leave of absence in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Where absence in term time is unavoidable, a Leave of Absence application form must be requested and submitted for consideration by the Head Teacher on behalf of the school governors, no less than 2 weeks prior to the requested date. If leave is taken in term time without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and liable to a penalty notice.

*The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. (The amendment has not defined 'exceptional circumstances' and therefore Headteacher/Governing Body will be responsible for deciding what they consider to be 'exceptional circumstances').*

## Penalty Notices for Leave of absence

The Head Teacher may request that the Local Authority consider issuing a Penalty Notice to parents, when students are taken out of school for 5 or more day's leave of absence without school authorisation.

## Penalty Notices

In addition to Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised leave of absence, Penalty Notices may also be issued when a student is stopped by Truancy Patrol or at the discretion of the Inclusion Manager if a parent/carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

The Penalty Notice fines are as follows:

- **£60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 per parent per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.**
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

## **Truancy Patrol**

When a student comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the student's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent / carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 schooldays, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent / carer.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the 3 subsequent weeks, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

## **Failure to ensure regular school attendance**

Surrey Inclusion Service may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent/carers who are failing to secure their Child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school and Local Authority Inclusion Officer. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than 7 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration.

## **Deletions from Registers**

Schools to be aware there is legislation around taking children off roll (Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and 2013).

- If a child moves schools during the year, they come off roll on the day they start the new provision.
- If the parent puts in writing that they intend to home educate, the matter should be referred to the Inclusion Service and a copy of the letter attached. The child can only be taken off roll if the parent specifies in writing that they intend to home educate. The Inclusion Service will carry out a home visit within 10 days of notification to discuss their decision.
- If the parent advises they are moving abroad and school have any reason to suppose that this might not be true they should refer the matter to the Inclusion Service to investigate. Otherwise it is good practice to request this advice in writing from the parent so that this letter can be placed on the school file in explanation for taking the child off roll.

## **Deletions after continuous absence of not less than 20 school days**

When taking children off roll due to twenty days' absence and in order to comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and the Education Act 1996, guidance states that schools must ensure the following applies:

*That the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and*

- i. at no time was the absence during that period authorised*



- ii. the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and*
- iii. both the school and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.*

If any parts of this are not complied with, the pupil cannot be taken off roll and this may result in the school being vulnerable to legal action and having to put the pupil back on roll.

In the case of a pupil where the parent has requested a leave of absence of over twenty school days it is important that the school notifies the parent in writing that failure to return within the twenty days could result in the pupil being taken off roll. Once the absence begins, and within the twenty days, even if the school believe that the family are not at home, they must endeavour to make enquiries with the family and are advised to write to the home address stating that if the pupil does not return by a specified date, they will be taken off roll. At the same time, a referral should be made to the Inclusion Officer, as representative of the LA, for enquiries to be made.

If the pupil does not return by the specified date and enquiries have been made, the pupil can be taken off roll and the parents should be notified. It is not enough just to warn parents that the pupil may be taken off roll, enquiries must be made by school and the LA.

### **Monitoring and review**

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2024.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

## Appendix 1: Attendance codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller	Pupil from a Traveller community is

Code	Definition	Scenario
	absence	travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
<b>Other codes</b>		
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day