

# Willand School

## Attendance Policy

### Rationale

Willand School is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. It is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage.

As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Our school will actively promote and encourage high attendance for all our pupils. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

### Objectives

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies
- to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school to the management of attendance and absence.

### Statutory Framework

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive effective, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised (see below).

### Roles and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at Willand School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community, including pupils, parents and staff.

- **Pupils**  
All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually. Pupils who experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their teacher and, if the need should arise, from the Headteacher.
- **Parents**  
Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible, either in writing or by telephone call. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parents. Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns that may arise over a child's attendance. If possible, parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

Parents whose first language is not English, or who have literacy difficulties, will be offered appropriate support from the school in matters of communication.

It is vital that parents understand that it is a criminal offence for a child not to attend school regularly and **this is the parent's responsibility**. Unauthorised absences may well result in the instigation of parental responsibility measures which could be a penalty notice, or a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Parents will be given every opportunity to improve their child's attendance and they will receive a written warning before any legal action is taken.

- **School**

Staff encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. The school will employ a range of strategies (see below) to encourage good attendance and punctuality, and, liaising closely with parents, will promptly investigate all absenteeism giving advice and support as needed. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently; where appropriate this may include a referral to the Education Welfare Service.

- **Education Welfare Service**

The EWS is a part of the Babcock LDP. Its aim is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full time education by attending school regularly. The EWS can help and advise parents/carers who may be experiencing difficulties that prevent this. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and the EWS expects parents/carers to do all that is necessary to make sure this happens.

- **Governors**

Governors will take a close and regular interest in attendance issues and targets and will ensure that school leaders take appropriate action on attendance.

## **Safeguarding**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. This is our highest priority. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. Due to clear Behaviour, Anti-bullying and Child Protection Policies and through regular staff training and updates, staff are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect. They follow our procedures, to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice in line with current legislature and guidelines.

Staff, pupils, parents and governors should feel secure that they could raise any issues or concerns about the safety or welfare of children and knowing that they will be listened to and taken seriously.

As a school, we are part of the Operation Encompass Scheme, which ensures that a number of the school staff are trained to liaise with the police. They receive information in confidence. This is then used to support children and their families, who have been involved in, or exposed to, a domestic abuse incident. The Family Support Advisor and Designated Safeguarding Lead are also trained to support those children and families in these circumstances.

## **Registration**

There is a legal requirement to have a morning and afternoon registration. Registers will be called promptly at 9.00am and at 1.15pm.

If a pupil arrives after the register has been called but before the close of registration, he/she will be marked as 'late before close of registration'. Registration closes at 9.30am and 1.30pm. If pupils arrive after the registers have closed, he/she will be marked as 'late after close of registration'. (See Appendix 1)

All class teachers will take registers in each of their classes and send the register down to the administration office for transfer of information on to SIMs.

## **Authorised/Unauthorised Absence**

It is vital that all staff adhere to the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence.

Willand School will decide on how an absence is to be recorded according to 'School Attendance: Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' (DFE October 2014)

This states that:

Absence can be **authorised** if:

- the pupil was absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body of the school'. This is the Headteacher of Willand School)
- the pupil was ill or 'prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause'
- 'the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs'
- the pupil is seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LEA for any of the following:
  1. The child's transport to and from school,
  2. Boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school, and
  3. Enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home.
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents and they go on the road
- there is a family bereavement
- the pupil is attending a viewing for a place at another school
- the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition
- the pupil is attending an external examination
- the pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit
- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance
- the pupil is attending unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but these should be made for a time after school if at all possible)

Absence will be **unauthorised** if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house
- the pupil stays at home to look after siblings or unwell parents
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for a birthday
- the pupil is resting after a late night
- the absence is to see visiting relatives or to visit relatives
- the pupil is away from school on a family holiday without permission.

## Reporting Absences

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform Willand School of the reason for a pupil's absence by 9.30 am on the first day. The school will operate a Response System whereby parents will be contacted when they have not notified the school of their child's absence.

Parents will be asked why their child is absent and how long they think the child will be away from school. The school will note the expected return date and will follow up with a further call to the parent/carer if the child has not returned on the expected date.

In any case of absence, parents/carers should contact the School by one of the following methods:

- By phone to the School Office.
- Personal contact with any member of staff at the school.
- By email to the school at [absence@willand.devon.sch.uk](mailto:absence@willand.devon.sch.uk)
- If parents are unable to be contacted by the school, every effort will be made to establish contact with the parent/carer.
- Where no justification for a child's absence has been received, a parental note explaining the absence must be passed to the office or the pupil's teacher on the first day back.
- If contact cannot be established, the Education Welfare Officer will be contacted.

Where over the course of an academic year, a pupil has more than 20 sessions of illness, the school may write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, GP's appointment card or copy of a prescription. Without this evidence, any future absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

## **Punctuality**

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at Willand School on time. Punctuality is monitored by the school and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving at school on time.

## **Family Holidays during Term Time**

All schools are unable to authorise any requests for absence relating to holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision.

If a parent/carer is refused a holiday request and the pupil is still taken out of school by the parent/carer, the School / Education Welfare Officer will be forced to consider a Penalty Notice. For details on Penalty Notices, see details on the Educational Welfare Service (above).

## **Procedures for Following Up Absence**

- If a pupil is persistently (or intermittently) absent, the Headteacher or her delegated representative, usually the SENCo will contact the parents.
- If a pupil is persistently absent, or late, and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. Parents of pupils with attendance below 85% may be requested to meet with the Educational Welfare Officer.

## **Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

- Willand School will work to provide an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed, that pupils feel their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.
- Pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement. The head teacher will monitor and review these targets.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period will, when appropriate, have work sent home to them and will be given suitable support upon their return to school.
- Pupils who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period will, when appropriate, have individually tailored reintegration programmes prepared for them.
- The Headteacher will include attendance matters in the termly reports to the school's governing body.
- The Headteacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies – when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Headteacher will have regular meetings with the school's Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

## **Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year. We will analyse our attendance levels and compare with local (Devon) and national levels.

## Appendix 1

### Guidance on Completion of Attendance Registers

Registers are important documents and must be kept safe as they may be called in evidence in legal proceedings. They may be the only record of who was on site in the event of an emergency such as a fire.

Registers must be marked by staff at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, in accordance with the attached sheet, which is also to be found with class registers.

The register will be closed at 9.30am and 1.30pm. Registers will then be sent to the office and placed in the red box.

Registers will be downloaded onto the computer and the necessary absence report completed. All absences will then be coded with the reason for absence.

Any unauthorised absence must be drawn to the attention of the Headteacher. Please also be aware of continual absences, even if accounted for and discuss with Headteacher.

The school attendance register is a legal document and should be marked at all times. The register is administered electronically via the Software SIMS Attendance using SIMS Pupil Registration Form 1. The register must clearly show the original entry and:

- any amendments
- the reason for the amendments
- who made the amendments
- when the amendment was made
- why it was made.

This helps to protect a school from false allegations that a register has been improperly altered.

Schools using computers for admission and attendance registers must make a back-up copy of the registers at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

### Completion of Registers – Guidance Notes

Schools are required to use the national [Absence and Attendance Codes](#) to record in the attendance register the attendance of pupils whose names are on the admissions register. The attendance register should be completed at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.

- Mark horizontally through box P for present A for absent
- Any child that is late should be marked both P and A
- Any child entering the class after the register has been returned, must visit the office to ensure that the register has been updated.

One of the following absence code letters indicates the reason for the absence:

Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other Authorised Circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration (attending other estab.)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session

G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness (not med/dental appointments)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised Abs (not covered by other code)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances	Not required to be in school
Y	Forced or partial closure	Not counted in possible attendances	Not required to be in school
Z	Pupil not on roll	Not counted in possible attendances	Not required to be in school
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances	Not required to be in school
-	All should attend / No mark recorded	No mark	No mark for session

## Appendix 2

### Guidance on Attendance and Admission Records

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated each regulation applies to all schools in England.

A pupil is placed on the admission and attendance registers on the first day that they are expected to attend.

An admissions register must contain an index in alphabetical order of all the pupils that attend school and, in relation to each pupil, the following information:

- full name
- sex
- the name and address of each parent and the parent or guardian with whom the child resides, and a telephone number of a parent in case of emergency
- date of birth
- the date of admission or re-admission
- the name and address of the school they last attended, if any.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 set out the grounds on which the name of a pupil shall be deleted from the admissions register:

- When a pupil leaves the school their name will remain on the register until contacted BY THE RECEIVING SCHOOL.
- Where is classed as 'missing' they will remain on the register for three months after which time the EWO will be contacted for further advice.
- Where an exclusion is upheld by the independent appeal panel, the clerk should also advise the parent to contact the appropriate person at the home LA about arrangements for their child's continuing education. The Headteacher/teacher in charge may legally remove the pupil's name from the school/pupil referral unit roll the day after the conclusion of the appeal. If the parents decide not to go through the independent appeal panel, the pupil cannot be deleted from the school roll before the latest day for lodging an appeal.

**POLICY HISTORY**

<b>Policy Date</b>	<b>Summary of change</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Version/ Implementation Date</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
<b>28/1/14</b>	<b>Removal of up to 10 day holiday discretion. Some amendments to wording.</b>	<b>AH/AHi</b>	<b>6/2/14</b>	<b>Feb 16</b>
<b>29/01/16</b>	<b>Removal of 'Exceptional circumstances'. Update of guidance document.</b>	<b>AH/AHi</b>	<b>08/02/16</b>	<b>Feb 18</b>
<b>31/01/18</b>	<b>No changes</b>	<b>AH/AHi</b>	<b>08/02/18</b>	<b>Feb 20</b>