

Attendance Policy

Wilburton CE Primary School



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1. Aims

Wilburton CE Primary School aims to ensure the achievement of high levels of attendance and punctuality by all pupils. This will enable all pupils at the school to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

We aim to meet 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

Having a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers

Acting early to address patterns of absence

Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. It is our aim to work with parents and children, with an inclusive approach that engages positively with parents.

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.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are 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 body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.3 School Administration Assistant

The school administration assistant is responsible for:

- Accurately record pupil attendance daily using the school's MIS following the required attendance codes set by the DfE and the School's Attendance Policy.
- Take calls/messages from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Return attendance forms to the LA/DfE as required.
- Produce regular summary attendance reports for the Headteacher and reporting concerns about attendance to the Headteacher.
- Follow up school attendance and punctuality issues with parents, following the School's Behaviour Policy.
- Issue Penalty Notices when required with the authorisation of the Headteacher.
- Liaise with parents of travelling families to ensure regular contact when away from school.
- Monitor the late arrival of pupils and contact parents/carers to identify reasons for non-attendance, ensuring all safeguarding procedures are followed.

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office in each morning and afternoon session.

3.5 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. School procedures

4.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day (8:45am) and at the start of the afternoon session (1:00/1:15pm). It will mark whether every pupil is:

- **Present**
- **Attending an approved off-site educational activity**
- **Absent**
- **Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances**

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Registers are checked by Administrative Staff. Attendance data is held electronically on the SIMS Management Information System, accessible by the Head teacher and Administrative Staff who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.

Children may arrive at school from 8.40 and go straight to class. There is no supervision on site for children before this time and the school is not legally responsible for them. Registration is called at 8.45 am and again at 1:15pm. Registers will close five minutes after registration times. A pupil that arrives after this time will be marked as 'late' unless the school have previously acknowledged the reason for their late arrival into school.

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school every day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:00am. This can be done by phoning, emailing or in person to the Office.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, medicine bottle or other appropriate form of evidence. We 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 will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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 and return to school immediately following their consultation.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start at the start of the school day. The Headteacher monitors lateness of pupils as punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is of extreme importance therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Headteacher will ask to meet with the parents to discuss the issue. Support (if required) and monitoring will follow.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit or make enquires with friends, neighbours etc.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels with termly registration reports and at the end of year with their child's report.

Parents can also request the latest copy of their child's attendance report during the school year – this will be provided by the Office within 5 working days.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

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 or Local Authority 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. The maximum allowance for travelling for occupational purposes is 90 days per year.

Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement.

Attendance at events of significant cultural or national significance, where absence is minimal and rare and supported by the Headteacher.

Absence from school will not be authorised for things such as shopping, over-sleeping, birthdays, family days out for pupil requests.

Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the Special Leave of Absence form. These may be obtained from the school office or can be completed online on the school website at

<http://www.wilburton.cambs.sch.uk/index.php/parents/attendance>

5.2 Term Time Holidays

Holidays taken in term time will not be approved. Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave (code G) for 6 consecutive sessions (3 days) or more, not authorised by the school under exceptional circumstances rule, **may** receive a Penalty Notice.

5.3 Reduced Timetables and Flexi-Schooling Requests

In very exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupils' individual needs. Such reduced timetables can only be agreed by the Headteacher in conjunction with parents/carers, and with advice from medical staff or specialist teachers. An agreement will show in writing the reasons for the reduced timetable, and a time scale by which the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

Requests for flexi-schooling are not normally granted, as the school believes that all children should have the benefit of a broad, rich curriculum and the benefits of feeling part of the school community. Requests for flexi-schooling should be made in writing to the Headteacher who will then assess each case on its merits for the child.

5.4 Legal sanctions

Local Authorities can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. As of 30th November 2015, the rate per parent per child will be £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. 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.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

A penalty notice can also be issued where a child has **at least 8 unauthorised sessions over an 8 week period and attendance is below 90%**. However, the school will first apply its resources to improve attendance before a request for a penalty notice is made in these circumstances.

If 3 or more term time leave Penalty Notices have been issued over a 3 year period then prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may be considered as an alternative to a Penalty Notice fine being issued. Where a parent takes a child out of school during term time for an extended period (20 days or more), not authorised by the school, prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may also be considered by the Local Authority.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Evidence has shown that tackling absence can be most effective when a number of different approaches are taken by schools to encourage attendance. Environmental factors need to be considered and schools need to respond to their own particular problems in a way that works best for them.

(Tackling Absence – the role of the school, Cambridgeshire County Council, 2019)

Regular school attendance will be promoted by the school using newsletters, information, Local Authority letters to parents, end of year reports and in parent consultations.

Where there are concerns about attendance, the following steps will be initiated until attendance improves:

1. As soon as possible, a verbal discussion with parent or sending Attendance Email 1 or Lateness Email 1 to highlight that attendance is a concern.
2. If there is no improvement which is sustained in 6 weeks, parents will be invited to an informal meeting that provide the opportunity for issues to be explored. A record of the meeting will be made in the school's attendance monitoring file, including date, who it was with, any factors or issues, expected outcomes and timescale for monitoring. If an improvement has been made then a thank you acknowledgement email will be sent.
3. If the parents do not wish to attend a meeting, or attendance does not improve in the agreed timescale, a letter will be sent to parents outlining concerns about attendance and informing them of their legal responsibilities regarding school attendance. The letter will also contain details of a monitoring period (usually 8 weeks) and a target for attendance during this period.
4. If attendance remains a concern or targets have not been met, then the school will call a formal Parent Contract Meeting (PCM). A parent contract meeting is an opportunity for the school and

parent/s to discuss a child's attendance and to review the impact of school interventions thus far offered. It provides the opportunity for parents to discuss more generally any difficulties which the family are having and types of support that may be helpful to them. The contract will include a monitoring period, a school target (usually 96% over 8 weeks) and clear guidance on what will happen if the target is not met, and if attendance falls below 90% over the monitoring period.

5. If attendance falls below 90% over the monitoring period, all of which is unauthorised, then the school will refer the case to Cambridgeshire County Council for legal intervention.

At Stage 2 above, and if the child has had 15 days or more away from school because of ongoing health needs (whether consecutive or cumulative across the school year), a Health Care Plan will be offered to the parents. If the parents accept the invitation to create a Health Care Plan for their child, the school is required to notify the Local Authority for quality assurance purposes. Any certification will be accepted from the responsible specialist and/or the GP where appropriate. If conditions are undiagnosed, the school will take all reasonable steps to arrange a multiagency meeting to plan an alternative package of education if appropriate. If the parents decline a Health Care Plan and attendance remains a concern, then Stage 3 will be implemented as above.

7. Children missing from education

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer via a CME report sent to cme@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

If there is Social Care involvement or Child Protection then the Local Authority Attendance Office and the linked Social Worker will be informed immediately.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing body.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
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 absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Pupil Absence Request Form (Term Time Leave)

Wilburton CE Primary School

Please note the following:

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended 2013 do not permit headteachers to authorise leave for holidays.
- The headteacher will grant approval for absences with valid reasons as stated in the school's attendance policy, and may grant approval for other absences in exceptional circumstances.
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the headteacher will determine the length of absence authorised.
- If leave of absence is granted, please contact the school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress.
- This form MUST be completed by the parents/carers before requests will be considered.

Dear Headteacher,

I wish to apply for leave of absence for:

Name of child(ren): _____

From (date): _____ to (date): _____

Reason for absence (continue on a separate sheet if needed):

Signature of Parent/Carer: _____ Date: _____

For the headteacher to complete:

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your leave of absence request is:

☐

authorised

☐

not authorised

Comment/Reasons for decision:

Signed _____ Date _____

Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time

Wilburton CE Primary School, the Local Authority and Government believe that absence during term time should be avoided as they can have a damaging effect on a pupil's education and overall achievement. The expected attendance for all pupils is 100%. 96% is considered to be the minimum standard. However, it is recognised that there may be exceptional reasons that may justify authorisation of the absence by the Headteacher.

Please refer to our Attendance Policy for details of when absences may/may not be authorised. The policy can be downloaded from the school website or requested from the office.

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.

Please note:

- Application is to be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the Pupil Absence Request Form. These may be obtained from the school office.
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents will be informed within 7 school days of the application for leave as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This 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.

As of November 30th 2015 the rate **per parent per child** will be £60 if paid within 21 days and rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

If a 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 a maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

If 3 or more term time leave Penalty Notices have been issued over a 3 year period then prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may be considered as an alternative to a Penalty Notice fine being issued. Where a parent takes a child out of school during term time for an extended period (20 days or more), not authorised by the school, prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may also be considered by the Local Authority.

NB the word parent includes legal guardians and carers

Attendance Email 1

Date

Name of parent

Dear Parent

Re: Child's Name:

We have noticed that your child's/children's attendance at school is low and we are concerned about the learning that is being missed. We have attached a copy of the attendance record so that you can view a detailed breakdown of your child's attendance at school.

There are many reasons that can affect children's attendance, and we appreciate that most of them are out of your control. Sometimes, however, we might not be aware of the cumulative total of a child's absence. That is why we are getting in touch, and by doing so, we wish to reach out and ask if there are ways that we can work together to support attendance and learning. If there are any particular circumstances or issues that you would like to discuss, please call us.

We will continue to monitor attendance over the next six weeks and will get in touch if your child's learning continues to be affected.

Best wishes,

D. Aston and K. Wenn

Lateness Email 1

Date

Name of parent

Dear Parent

Re: Child's Name:

We have noticed that your child's/children's punctuality at school is of concern, and lateness is becoming an issue. Details of lateness is shown in the table below. If you wish to have a closer look at your child's attendance record, please ask at the Office for a copy.

Child's Name	Period	Number of days late	Total minutes late

When children arrive late into lessons they find it harder to settle into learning because they have missed the morning routine in class. It also affects other children because the teacher has to repeat what has been missed.

All children should arrive at school between 8:40-8:45am to begin their morning work, and registers are taken at 8:45am. If your child arrives after the registers close, it is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If there are any particular circumstances or issues that you would like to discuss, please call us.

We will continue to monitor punctuality over the next six weeks and will get in touch if your child's learning continues to be affected.

Best wishes,

D. Aston and K. Wenn

Lateness Email 2

Date

Name of parent

Dear Parent,

Following our last email to you regarding your child's/children's punctuality at school, we are writing to you to say that it is still a concern. This is shown in the table below. If you wish to have a closer look at your child's attendance record, please ask at the Office for a copy.

Child's Name	Period	Number of days late	Total minutes late

Outside of exceptional circumstances, children should arrive at school by 8:45am so they can have the best start to their day. We know it is sometimes difficult if there are younger siblings etc, or if people have to be in different places, but arriving at school on time is really important for your child's learning. Where there are difficult circumstances, please talk to us about the help and support available as we really do want to help.

Your child's punctuality will continue to be monitored over the coming weeks and we hope we can work together with you to see an improvement.

Thank you,

David Aston and Karen Wenn

Invite to Attendance Meeting

Date:

Name of parent:

Dear Parent,

Following our earlier correspondence highlighting our concern about your child's/children's attendance at school, I am writing to you because our concerns still remain. Therefore, we need to discuss the situation. **Please contact me to do so.**

I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being considered.

In our discussion we will set a monitoring period (usually 8 weeks) and a target for attendance (usually at least 96%).

Best wishes,



David Aston

Headteacher

Invite to Parent Contract Meeting – The school will use a template 'Attendance Action Plan' for these meetings which will include:

- Pupil attendance data and analysis
- Action agreed
- Attendance target
- Timescale for improvement
- Agreement and signatures of parent(s) and school representative