



THE WINDMILLS JUNIOR SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Issue Date: June 2018

Policy aims

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This policy aims to safeguard children by ensuring that they attend school regularly and when they do not attend, school is aware of the reason for absence.

By law, parents are required to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are registered at school and attend regularly. Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn or has a day of religious observance.

The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- act early to address patterns of absence.

To enable children to achieve all they are capable of, it is essential that they attend regularly and punctually.

This policy has due regard to the DfE Departmental Advice on School Attendance – November 2013 (DFE-00257-2013) which summarises legal powers and duties that govern school attendance.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 – sections 434 (1) (3) (4) and (6) and 458 (4) and (5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Arrival and registration

All children should be in the playground ready to come into school at 8.55am each day. Children are allowed to arrive at school at 8.45 when the gates open, from this point they are supervised. We ask parents not to leave pupils on the drive unattended before this time. At 8.45 they are then invited to take their belongings into school and then to stay in class and do a morning task or return to the playground. The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where pupils are boarders, an attendance register. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as two attendances. Morning registration ends at 9.00 am. If a child arrives after registration period he/she will be marked as late.

The afternoon register is taken at 1.00 pm.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/ guardian outside the normal hours are signed in/out at the office. The class registers will be amended to reflect a child's attendance and it is vital it is kept up to date in case of fire.

Registers are checked by the Education Welfare Officer to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and incidence of any absences. They are legal documents and can be used in court.

Illness and medical appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

The school office should **be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence** through illness and then **each morning** for the duration of the absence. If parents have not contacted school, they will receive a text message asking them why the child is not at school. Unexplained absences will also be followed up by letter. If the reason for the absence is not explained then the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Parents will be reminded of the importance of good attendance and punctuality in newsletters, or more frequently if their child's attendance is causing concern.

Holidays in term time

Holidays in term time are not an entitlement and are strongly discouraged by the Government, Local Education Authority and School.

Parents should be aware that term time holidays are not an automatic right. The Headteacher can now only authorise absences for exceptional circumstances, **this will be very rare.**

Examples of this would be:

- Funeral of an immediate relative – 2 days
- Religious observation on days officially set apart by the religious body to which the parents belong – 1 day
- Close family wedding – 1 or 2 days depending on location
- Medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside the school day

Family holidays will not be authorised and leave for exceptional circumstances will not be considered during September or during SATs week for Y6 pupils. Fixed penalty notices may be issued if a pupil has more than 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absences in a ten week period.

Absence will not be granted retrospectively.

Holidays of any length cannot be authorised by the school. If a family wants to take an extended absence (more than four weeks) then their child would be taken off roll and they would have to re-apply for a place on their return. School places cannot be held open for a child on an extended holiday or for visiting family abroad.

Parents who decide to take a holiday without permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child and may receive a FPN. These remain on a child's record and are monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Officer.

If a pupil does not return to school within ten days of the agreed return date, for grant of leave in exceptional circumstances in term time, then the school will consider removing the child from the school roll by referring the pupil to the Local Authority Children Missing from Education Team. The school has the right to do this under Government legislation.

Parents needing exceptional circumstances to be considered for absences should make an appointment to discuss this with the Headteacher, well in advance. Holidays or visiting family members do not count as exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised.

Arrangements for absence in other circumstances

Family bereavement and exceptional circumstances do occur, although be it rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be written in the register.

Before making your request to withdraw your child from school you are advised to consider the following information.

1. Absence from learning has been proven to adversely affect children's academic progress.
2. Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for confirmation from a medical professional if a child's absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. Unacceptable reasons for absence will be classed as unauthorised.

Only in exceptional circumstances will a request for absence from school be authorised and this will only be for a very short period of time. Examples would be:

- Funeral of an immediate relative – 2 days
- Religious observation on days officially set apart by the religious body to which the parents belong – 1 day
- Close family wedding – 1 /2 days depending on location
- Medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside the school day

3. All requests should provide details and reasons why the absence is considered to be exceptional. The Headteacher, in accordance with guidance published by the DfE, will determine if the absence will be authorised.

4. Family holidays do not meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances. Consequently, absence for holidays will not be authorised and will be recorded as unauthorised.

5. If a child has 5 or more days of unauthorised absence, a Fixed Penalty Notice fine may be issued if the child has a poor attendance record. A week's absence for holiday and a week's absence for illness would give an attendance figure below 95%. The Government considers attendance unacceptable below 95%.

6. The number of days absence incurred will be noted in your child's personal records, and their attendance will be reported every year. Your child's attendance history is part of their school records.

Use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

FPNs are used as a measure to address non-attendance at school and are issued by WSCC. When a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised sessions of absence (5 school days - a school day is two sessions AM and PM) in a 10 school week period issuing a FPN will be considered.

Absence is recorded as unauthorised in the following situations:

- A holiday or period of absence in term time, which has not been authorised by the Headteacher. The Government has directed that Headteachers may only grant leave for a holiday in exceptional circumstances. In order to come into line with many of the local secondary schools and primary schools in WSCC; and because of a concern about the number of holidays taken during term time, Windmills Junior School will now be making referrals for the issuing of FPNs for unauthorised holidays.
- If you withdraw your child/children from school during term time without authorisation being requested in advance.
- School refusal or truancy or frequent late arrival to school
- Frequent or lengthy absence due to illness without supporting medical documentation



THE WINDMILLS JUNIOR SCHOOL & WSCC
PARENTAL REQUEST TO SCHOOL TO AUTHORISE AN
ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES



Child's Name	
Date of birth	
Year Group	
Class/form	
Name of person making request & relationship with child	
Address	
Phone Number	
Dates your child will be absent from school	
Total number of school days missed	

Absences will only be authorised if this request is made in advance of the dates your child will be absent from school AND if the circumstances of the absence are exceptional. There is no entitlement to take a child out of school for a family holiday.

The law states that parents must ensure their children regularly attend school to receive their education. The head teacher can only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. An exceptional circumstance is likely to be rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

Whether the absence is exceptional is at the Headteacher's discretion based on their assessment of the situation and can vary from school to school. A week's absence for holiday and a week's absence for illness would give an attendance figure below 95%. The Government considers attendance unacceptable below 95%.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for your absence request. You may be asked to provide evidence to support your request. Please note that having already booked a holiday will not be considered as a good reason for term time absence. In relation to 'unavoidable' absence, the Headteacher will consider whether the event could have reasonably been scheduled at another time. Issues of cost will not be considered as an exceptional reason.

If you wish for this absence to be authorised, you will need to fully explain (together with evidence) why the circumstances of this absence are exceptional. Please fill in the box below and overleaf.

Why is this absence exceptional?

Why is this absence exceptional? (continued)

I confirm that the information I have given on this form is true. I understand that if I do not fully complete this form, fully respond to requests for further information or that ultimately the absence is not authorised, my child's attendance will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. I understand that I must ensure my child attends school regularly and that failing to do so is a criminal offence which may result in legal proceedings being taken against me, either through a Penalty Notice or by prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Signed:..... Date:
(Parent/Carer)

Full Name:.....

Unless further information is required, a decision will be sent to you within 5 school days.

For School use	Date received:	Attendance %:
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Has been authorised Has not been authorised Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued:

Reason:

- Holidays cannot be authorised in term time
- Reasons given for time away from school are not 'exceptional'
- FPN will be issued as more than 10 sessions in a 10 week period have been missed which are unauthorised (5 school days - a school day is two sessions AM and PM)
- FPN will be issued as attendance is a concern (10 sessions, in 10 weeks)
- FPN will not be issued as the absence is less than 5 days. However, attendance will be monitored and further absences may result in a FPN being issued in line with policy

SIGNED: _____ **DATE:** _____
Headteacher: L. Murray