



Wilbarston CEVC Primary School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed – Sept 2022

Next review – Sept 2025

Our Vision as a Church of England school is to deliver a caring, stimulating and enjoyable experience for all our pupils, during which pupils are expected to do their best at all times and to live out our Christian values by treating others as they would like to be treated. John 10:10 states (Good News Bible) "I have come in order that you might have life--life in all its fullness" and our vision aligns with this in that through our broad and balanced curriculum offer pupils should leave our school with: strong basic skills of communication, self-management and team-working skills, be able to access the next stage of learning, be useful and caring citizens of our country with pride and awareness of our collective values and with special memories of their time at our school.

Our Mission Statement is "to learn with care, fun, faith and respect".

Ethos Statement

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experiences it offers to all its pupils.

The children will gain skills, knowledge, and understanding enabling them to experience success and to realise their potential in a safe and caring environment. The children will be taught those values and attitudes which will strengthen their respect for themselves and others, enabling them to take their place in society with confidence. The way people behave towards one another plays a vital role in achieving this aim.

Rationale and responsibilities

Maintaining high levels of attendance is the joint responsibility of everyone in the school community, pupils, parents, governors and all staff.

At Wilbarston CE Primary School we:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school

For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school. Your child should be at school, on time, every day.

It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure punctual and regular school attendance set out in Section 441 of the 1996 Education Act. Absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution under Section 441 or 441a of the 1996 Education Act. Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, suitably dressed and equipped and in a fit condition ready to learn. A pupil's absence from school will be deemed as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received from the parent/carer. Parents/carers will be informed promptly of any concerns that may arise over a child's attendance. Parents/carers should avoid, if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for their children during school hours.

Attendance monitoring is conducted on a weekly basis by office staff to ensure all absences are approved subject to statutory requirements. The Headteacher monitors attendance termly. The Headteacher may also review in comparison with similar schools or the same time periods each year. The Headteacher will ask staff to speak to parents about absence if there is a concern. Following further monitoring a letter may be sent which explains that their child is below the level expected and that it must be improved to the school attendance target of 97%.

Staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example.

Registration Times

School open to pupils 8.40am

Registration 8.55am 8.55am

First lesson commences 9.00 a.m.

Afternoon registration Robins and Snowy Owls 1p.m.

Afternoon registration Kingfishers and Flamingos 1.30pm

School finishes 3.30 p.m.

Registers will be taken at the beginning of each session. If a pupil arrives after the register has been called they will be registered as late. We will follow Government guidance in that if pupils arrive after the start of the first lessons, then they will receive an unauthorised absence mark in the register (U). All lateness will be recorded (in a book kept in the office) upon arrival and a reason sought. The Late Book will be analysed by the Headteacher on a regular basis. These will be kept for 6 years then archived.

Holidays

The 2013 Amendments to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

At our school we understand "exceptional circumstances" to be a short absence from school due to family crisis or bereavement. Other circumstances may relate to a terminal illness in a child or family member or in the case of forces families where leave follows long tours abroad. In these circumstances we would consider authorising absence. In no other case would a family holiday be considered as exceptional circumstances.

In line with the Government guidance on attendance from 2013 and in line with North Northamptonshire County Council (NNC) advice that all absences of 5 consecutive **school days** (10 sessions) or more are now automatically referred by school staff to the Local Authority department who will analyse the attendance information and may progress the case to a Fixed Penalty Fine. All parents have been aware of this in advance and are aware the school have no discretion in relation to this.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as, illness or medical treatment, which unavoidably fall in school time. However, this will still impact on the child's attendance percentage.

Authorised/Unauthorised absence in the case of illness

A letter or other communication does not in itself authorise an absence. It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to authorise an absence.

Absence will be authorised for the following reasons:

- genuine illness
- unforeseen family crisis
- unavoidable medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers are expected to notify the school, by 9a.m. either by telephone, in writing or in person, on the first day of absence, giving the reason and, if possible, the likely duration of the absence. They should update the school daily by telephone except in the case of vomiting where the NHS advises 48 hour absence from school after the last episode.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to NNC using legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late - after 9.15 am.
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- daytrips and holidays in term time
- haircuts, looking after siblings

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend school, it is never best 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.

Follow Up Procedures

If a child is absent without any explanation, then the school will contact the parent/carer as soon as registration is closed. Either a member of the support staff or the school office will make the contact. The office staff will log these contacts for teachers and pass them on. The logs of lateness or absence will be kept for 6 years then archived.

Where no contact is made after several phone calls at different times, the school will follow the procedure outlined by the Local Authority for children missing from education. This could involve a home visit by school staff and the involvement of external agencies e.g. the police if necessary to assure the wellbeing of pupils.

Levels of absence:

The Governing Body have given the Headteacher the discretion to investigate absence as deemed appropriate. In a small school the staff know each family and may not need to investigate a change in attendance pattern because the family have already made contact with a member of staff. However, we will work together to improve the attendance of the child. Where attendance becomes a concern the staff will follow the procedures below:

1. The classteacher or headteacher will speak to the parent.
2. A formal letter will be sent (attached) and leaflet (attached).
3. The Headteacher will review the attendance and there may be non-authorisation of absence without evidence. (Evidence may be prescription or letter from doctor.) There will also be a meeting with parent and headteacher.
4. Where attendance falls below 85% this is classified as **persistent absence**. If this happens parents/carers will be notified. Where parents/carers are in agreement a strategy will be put into place to improve the attendance and intervention. A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their percentage attendance reaches 85% for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carers fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully to enable this to improve.

Teachers will raise attendance on parents' evenings if necessary.

An attendance of less than 85% is regarded as actionable by the Local Authority and would be referred for further action to the correct Local Authority body.

Attendance at our school is generally very good, meeting the Government target of 97%. We are proud of this and work hard to maintain this with our families.

Reviewed every 3 years or as required by national or local changes.

Approved by _____ C Holden. _____ Chair of Governors