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# Attendance Policy Windmill Primary School

## Document Management Information

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Applicable to:</b>                | All parents and carers  |
| <b>Development and Consultation:</b> | All Attendance policy has been reviewed from the previous Attendance policy                     |
| <b>Dissemination:</b>                | This policy will be available to all parents and carers via the website and staff               |
| <b>Implementation:</b>               | The Academy Principal is responsible for ensuring the consistent implementation of this policy. |
| <b>Training:</b>                     | The attendance lead is responsible for holding training sessions for staff                      |
| <b>Policy Author:</b>                | Mr Rhys Penny   |
| <b>Approval Date:</b>                | November 2022   |
| <b>Next Review Due:</b>              | July 2024   |

## Revision History

| <b>Document version</b> | <b>Description of Revision</b>  | <b>Date Approved</b> |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------|
| V1                      | Policy updated  | September 2021       |
| V2                      | Attendance percentages updated<br>Updated registration times since Covid<br>Local Authority updated | September 2022       |

## Our Principles – Promoting Great Attendance

At Windmill Primary School we believe that good attendance is essential for our pupils to secure the learning and life skills needed for success in the future. To achieve great attendance, we will work in partnership with families to address concerns quickly and help all children to attend regularly. We also recognise that the best way to engage young people in learning is to provide high quality learning that is dynamic, exciting, and engaging. We want our children to have a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning. We want our children to aim high and not just reach for the stars but grab them with both hands!

Our curriculum that is rooted in three core themes of World – Work – Wellness and by ensuring that lessons are interesting and relevant, we aim to ensure that all our children want to come to school, and every day is just too exciting to miss!

## School Aims

- Promote good attendance and punctuality
- Help every child to reach their full potential, unhindered by unnecessary breaks in their learning
- Maintain regular monitoring of attendance and punctuality to ensure consistency across the school
- Communicate regularly with families regarding their child's attendance and punctuality and support when needed
- Ensure that regular attendance and punctuality is recognised and valued through:
  - Reporting whole weekly attendance on the school newsletter
  - Through the PSHE curriculum and our work on values (resilience)
  - Windmill Achievement Time

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that their children attend regularly. At Windmill Primary, we believe that **everyone** in our school community has a part to play in securing good school attendance.

***Staff at the school will always support families to improve attendance where it is of concern.***

For the academic year 2023-2024 the following target has been agreed  
Overall attendance data: 96% in line with National

## Recording Attendance

The school is legally required to keep an attendance register that records which pupils are present or absent at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

| Registration Times | AM     | PM      |
|--------------------|--------|---------|
| Register open      | 8:40am | 12:45pm |
| Register closed    | 9:00am | 12:55pm |

- The school gates are opened at 8.35am, and a member of SLT will be on the school playground
- School staff are on duty in the classrooms from 8.40am.
- The school day officially starts at 8.50am, when the register is taken.
- If a child arrives after the start of registration but before the close of registers, they will be marked as late, and receive an 'L' code.
- If a child arrives in school after registers have closed, the child will receive a 'U' code, which is an unauthorised absence mark.

## Regular Attendance

Parents/guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their children receive efficient, fulltime education by regular attendance at school or otherwise, as outlined in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996.

### **Actions to address non-attendance - Prosecution**

Local authorities, and therefore by definitions, schools may use legal enforcement, where it is necessary, to ensure that parents ensure their children attend school regularly.

### **Actions to address non-attendance - Penalty Notices**

Local Education Authorities, Head Teachers and the Police can issue penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school and will do so in accordance with the local authority code of conduct relating to the issuing of penalty notices.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure a pupil's attendance at school.

## Absence:

### Categories of Absence:

There are two categories of absence:

#### **(i) Authorised (approved)**

i.e. when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has been advised by the parents of this reason; these could include illness, hospital appointments, religious reasons or unavoidable circumstances such as a bereavement or emergency.

#### **(ii) Unauthorised (not approved)**

i.e. when a child is away from school without permission of the school (even if the parent has authorised the absence) where there are no exceptional circumstances, or where no explanation of absence has been provided

A child arriving after the close of registers without good reason or truancy will also be classified as an unauthorised absence.

Other unauthorised absences can include:

- Parents / carers keeping a child away from school unnecessarily (as deemed by the Principal),
- Routine doctor / dentist appointments which could be scheduled outside the school day
- Family holidays

***Absences can only be authorised by the Principal (or designated member of staff) - parents do not have this authority.***

A form which should be completed by parents to request authorisation for a school absence can be found in the appendix. Copies are also available from the school office.

## Reporting an Absence

If a child is absent for any reason, the parent/carer (not family friends or siblings) should inform the school as early as possible on the first day of absence, ideally before 10am, and provide the school with an expected date of return and reason for absence. This can be done via email, telephone, written note, or school text message.

Wherever possible, parents are expected to make routine appointments such as dental or medical, outside of school time and/or in school holidays. The school requests confirmation of medical appointments during school hours. Evidence may include an appointment card, letter, prescription, or prescribed medication.

## Punctuality

When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson, which can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability and can contribute to feelings of discomfort or anxiety. This can have a significantly negative impact on pupils' well-being.

Punctuality is a vitally important life skill that reaches into employment in later life. Pupils who are persistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Ten minutes of lateness a day is equal to 31 hours of education being lost per academic year.

### End of the school day arrangements

- School closes at 3.20pm
- Parents and carers are politely requested to ensure that they arrive promptly to collect their children at the end of the day.
- As part of our duty to keep children safe, please be advised that staff will only release children to a named adult. If parents will be late or have made alternative collection arrangements, the school should be notified in advance. Proof of identification may be requested in the event of an unexpected change in the collection arrangements for a child.
- If a child is not collected, they will be taken to the front office and attempts to contact the parent / carer will be made. Emergency contact numbers will be used if we cannot contact the named parent / carer. Children's Social Care may be contacted if any child is left uncollected after 4.15pm and no other person with parental responsibility can be contacted.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, a Punctuality Letter will be sent to advise a child's parents / carers of the lateness and offering them the opportunity to discuss this. If punctuality remains of concern, the child / parents may be invited to a meeting to discuss this, to enable the reasons for lateness to be understood. Solutions will be agreed to help the family to ensure an improvement in punctuality. If appropriate, a **Punctuality Action Plan** may be agreed.

## School management of absence

- The school will telephone families of absent children where there has been no confirmation of absence by 10am on the first day of absence
- Staff may conduct a home visit in the event of concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of an absent child
- Unauthorised third day absences are reported to the Principal; staff will use their knowledge of the pupil's known history to agree what action to take, which may include a home visit
- Letters explaining absence will be kept in the child's file and may inform a longer-term assessment of attendance where there are grounds for concern

- If no notification is received following a child's return to school, a letter is sent to parents/carers and they are given 5 days in which to explain a child's absence before the absence is recorded as unauthorised.
- In line with Child Missing from Education procedures, absences in excess of 10 days are referred to Child Missing from Education (CME) team at the local authority, as appropriate.

## Absence concerns

The school is committed to the well-being and development of pupils. We will always consider a family's needs and offer additional support where possible to enable children to attend regularly. Parents should approach the class teacher to arrange time to discuss attendance with the most appropriate member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties. However frequent or persistent absence will lead to an escalation in response.

**Weekly Monitoring:** Attendance data for all pupils is collated on a Friday afternoon of each week using the Arbor Attendance data. From this unexplained absence letters are sent home.

**Half-Termly Monitoring:** The Principal, with the school's senior pastoral team, will review attendance data each half-term. Data will be evaluated against the school's attendance target, national attendance data, past performance, and in relation to specific groups and individuals. From this:

- The Principal will identify children whose attendance is of concern and consider appropriate intervention in accordance with the staged approach below.
- The Senior Leadership Team will share whole school attendance data with all staff to enable further evaluation, planning and reporting.

### **Annual Monitoring:**

- The Interim Action Board and NET senior leaders will review the annual whole school attendance alongside attendance of previous years and national statistics, to determine a challenging but realistic whole school attendance target.
- In addition to the weekly attendance reports, an electronic attendance report is created for each class each half term, to enable class teachers to proactively support and promote good attendance. Towards the end of the summer term the attendance summary for individual pupils for the academic year is reported to parents via the child's annual report. It includes attendance and absence, including any unauthorised absence.

## Persistent Absence

The Department for Education uses the term Persistent Absence to refer to absence of 10% or more, whether authorised or unauthorised.

The school will review and act to improve attendance using our Graduated Response chart below if:

- A child's overall attendance is below 90% - and is identified as a persistent absentee
- A child has 10 sessions \* of unauthorised absence across a 6-week period  
*\*a session is a morning or afternoon – so 1 school day equals 2 sessions*

An **Attendance Improvement Plan** may be agreed. In the case of persistent absence, or where a child's attendance fails to improve despite a range of supportive measures being put in place, the school may contact the Education Inclusion Partnership Team within Northamptonshire County Council and / or other agencies as appropriate, to secure a rapid improvement in the child's attendance at school.

## Leave of Absence

- In line with statutory guidance, the Principal cannot grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- The Principal will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent, i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised, which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice. Forms are available from the school office.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Principal.

## A Staged Approach to the Management of Attendance

**Whole school attendance is monitored weekly and at the end of each half term.**

Reasons for and patterns of absence are considered and where pupils are falling below 95% overall attendance, the class teacher will contact the family to discuss attendance and to check that there are no underlying concerns which may be affecting a child's attendance.

Appropriate support strategies will be put in place where required to help the child return to a good pattern of regular attendance.

**Where attendance falls below 96.% the following staged process will be followed.**

| Stage   | Trigger   | Outcome  |
|---------|---|--|
| Stage 1 | Attendance falls below 96% and / or the child's longer-term attendance is of concern.                         | <p><b>Attendance concern stage 1 letter sent to parents/ carers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressing concern about attendance</li> <li>• Informing the parents of current attendance figure</li> <li>• Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the nature and impact of 'persistent absence'</li> <li>• Attendance is monitored for a fixed period.</li> </ul>   |
| Stage 2 | <p>Parents have received a Stage 1 letter and attendance remains of concern.</p> <p><i>Within 3 weeks</i></p> | <p><b>Attendance concern stage 2 letter sent to parents / carers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referencing letter 1 and advising parents of ongoing concern about attendance and its impact on learning</li> <li>• Informing the parents of current attendance figure</li> <li>• Enclosing an attendance summary to date</li> <li>• Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the nature of 'persistent absence'</li> <li>• Inviting parents/carers to a meeting to discuss issues and agree an attendance target + support measures</li> <li>• Advising parents that the child's attendance is being monitored and of the duration of the monitoring period.</li> </ul> |
| Stage 3 | <p>Parents have received a Stage 2 letter and attendance remains of concern.</p> <p><i>Within 6 weeks</i></p> | <p><b>Attendance concern stage 3 letter sent to parents / carers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing parents of significant concern about attendance and impact of absence</li> <li>• Informing the parents of current attendance</li> <li>• Enclosing an attendance summary to date</li> <li>• Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the definition of 'persistent absence'</li> <li>• Requesting that the parents provide medical evidence of absence for illness, to enable the school to consider the authorisation of absence.</li> <li>• Inviting parents to an appointment with the Principal or Deputy on a specific date, with the</li> </ul>            |

|         |   |  |
|---------|---|--|
|         |   | <p>purpose of discussing attendance, agreeing an action plan of support, considering whether it may be appropriate to involve outside agencies, and setting an internal school attendance target.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notifying parents that should they chose not to attend; the meeting may take place without them and a target set.</li> </ul>  |
| Stage 4 | <p>Parents have failed an internal school attendance target and attendance is significantly below the level of Persistent Absence (90%)</p> | <p><b>Attendance concern stage 4 letter sent to parents / carers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing parents of ongoing concern about attendance</li> <li>• Informing the parents of attendance during the monitoring period.</li> <li>• Enclosing an attendance summary to date</li> <li>• Notifying parents that the school intends to discuss their child’s attendance with the Local Authority’s Educational Inclusion Partnership Team (EIP) at NCC and may make a formal referral – see below*</li> </ul> |
|         | <p><b>During a monitoring period, attendance improves</b></p>   | <p>A Letter of Praise will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing the parents of attendance during the monitoring period.</li> <li>• Notifying parents that the school will continue to monitor attendance to ensure sustained improvement</li> </ul>  |

\*The Education Inclusion Team has the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with North Northamptonshire Council Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Northamptonshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.