

# ATTENDANCE POLICY



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Responsibility	Emma Riley
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\*subject to any relevant changes in legislation or other appropriate guidelines

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## Statement of intent

Willow Tree Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

(a) to age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_Chair of governors

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2015
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- DfE Working together to improve school attendance Sept 2022
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education.'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education.'

1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- **Complaints Procedures Policy**
- **Self Esteem and Behaviour Policy**
- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The Local Advisory Board (LAB) has overall responsibility for:

- The implementation of the Primary Attendance Policy and procedures of Willow Tree Primary School.
- Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' (2023) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- 2.2. The Principal is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Primary Attendance Policy and procedures of the school, and distributing these to parents.
- 2.3. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for:
  - Following the Primary Attendance Policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
  - Modelling good attendance behaviour.
  - Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- 2.4. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- 2.5. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.
- 2.6. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

### 3. Definitions

- 3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:
  - **“Absence”** as:
    - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
    - Not attending school for any reason.
  - An **“authorised absence”** as:
    - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
    - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
    - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
    - An absence due to a family emergency.
  - An **“unauthorised absence”** as:
    - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
    - Truancy before or during the school day.

- Absences which have never been properly explained.
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
  - Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
  - Leaving school for no reason during the day.
- **“Persistent absenteeism”** as:
    - Missing **10 percent** or more of schooling across the year **for any reason**.

## 4. Training of staff

- 4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

## 5. Pupil expectations

- 5.1. Pupils are expected to attend school every day and to keep their attendance at, or above, 95 percent throughout the year.

## 6. Absence procedures

- 6.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence preferably before the start of the school day.
- 6.2. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.
- 6.3. As soon as registers close an absence report will be printed and the Learning Mentor will list pupils who are absent from school. This will be cross checked against phone calls received and messages left on the school phone system.
- 6.4. A phone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend

school. This will be followed up with a text message if no contact is made a welfare visit will take place.

- 6.5. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer.
- 6.6. If we are unable to contact a parent/carer then a home visit will be made on that day. In the interests of safety, two members of staff MUST attend a home visit. If we are unable to speak to a parent or carer during the home visit, then a letter will be posted through the door asking parents/carers to contact school as soon as possible. If no contact is made the Principal will assess if a request for a welfare visit from the Police is required.
- 6.7. The school will inform the LA of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.
- 6.8. If a pupil's attendance drops to a level of At Risk of Persistent Absence percentage 90.1% - 92%, the Attendance Officer will be informed, and a formal letter will be sent to inform parents and to offer support.
- 6.9. If a pupil's attendance is identified as a concern the attendance officer will utilise the actions on the Support Plan flow chart (appendix 1) to support the family to improve attendance.
- 6.10. Penalty Warning Letters and Penalty Warning Notices - If a pupil's attendance reaches 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10 - week period this includes Leave of Absence taken which has not been authorised by the Principal and arriving late after the register has closed, the Attendance Officer will send out a Penalty Warning Letter and if there are any additional unauthorised sessions of absence that occur within the 10 - week period and your child's attendance is below 95%, school will complete the paperwork for a Penalty Notice which will be sent to the LA to be actioned.
- 6.11. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.
- 6.12. Children whose attendance is below 90% will be required to provide medical evidence for all absences.
- 6.13. In addition to the actions above, school will regularly update you on your child's attendance via text, Do Jo, letter and face to face. This communication is to celebrate good attendance and also to let you

know if your child's attendance is 90% or under which is considered by the Local Authority as 'Persistent Absence' and equates to at least 1/2 a days missed learning each week. We will also communicate to you if your child's attendance drops to between 92% and 90.1% as this is considered by the Local Authority as 'At Risk of Persistent Absence'. We hope this information will help your child to access as much learning as possible to ensure they reach their own full potential and to increase their life chances as they grow up and become adults.

**SEE APPENDIX 2**

## **7. Contact information**

7.1. Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.

## **8. Attendance register**

8.1 The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational visit
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

8.2 The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used. In addition to this the school will use the additional DFE 'Recording non-attendance related to Coronavirus' guidance:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness



- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Education visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Duel registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

8.3 When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

8.4 All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

8.5 Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

## **9. Attendance officer**

9.1. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the attendance officer who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent meeting.

9.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance officer has the power to request sanctions such as Penalty Notices for parents following a Penalty Warning Letter being sent. And, to refer to School Attendance for support and possible statutory action.

## **10. Lateness**

- 10.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 10.2. The school day starts at 8.55am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.
- 10.3. Registers are marked by 9:00am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 10.4. The register closes at 9:30. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- 10.5. After lunch, registers are marked by 13:45. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 10.6. The register closes at 13:50. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- 10.7. Pupils attending after the register has been taken but before 9.30 will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

## **11. Term-time leave**

- 11.1. At Willow Tree Primary School our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 11.2. The Principal is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 11.3. The Principal is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the Principal will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 11.4. The Principal will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the Principal.
- 11.5. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 11.6. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
  - Immediately before and during assessment periods
  - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence

- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason
- 11.7. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Principal, they may be subject to sanctions such as Penalty Notices (Fine).
- 11.8. Parents/Carers will be required to submit any requests for leave at least 14 days before the start of absence.

## **12. Leave during lunch times**

- 12.1 Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the Principal – it is at the Principal's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.
- 12.2 Parents are required to submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the Principal.
- 12.3 The Principal will consider the request and will invite the parent in to the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises.
- 12.4 The Principal reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.
- 12.5 Pupils will leave the school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.
- 12.7 Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register at the school office.
- 12.8 A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff has given their permission.
- 12.9 If a pupil is expected to be leaving the school premises, they are required to do so – pupils will go home as soon as they leave the site and will not loiter outside the premises.

- 12.10 If a pupil expected to leave no longer has reason to do so, e.g. a medical appointment is cancelled, they should inform a member of staff at the school office immediately.
- 12.11 Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises where they have a lunch time detention – parents will be informed promptly if this is the case and suitable arrangements will be implemented, e.g. access to a school lunch.
- 12.12 Pupils may also not be permitted to leave the school premises where they have displayed poor behaviour at any time – parents will be informed promptly if this is the case and suitable arrangements will be implemented, e.g. access to a school lunch.
- 12.13 The Principal reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where a pupil displays poor conduct of behaviour when off the premises, or where there are attendance concerns.
- 12.14 Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the Principal's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents are not entitled to appeal the decision.
- 12.15 Parents are able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the Principal.
- 12.16 Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

### **13. Truancy**

- 13.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- 13.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- 13.3. All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 9:00am and 13:50, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.
- 13.4. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.
- 13.5. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting.

13.6. If truancy is suspected, the Principal is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

13.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A Penalty Notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

## **14. Missing children**

14.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the Principal.

14.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The Teacher/teaching assistant should ensure that other pupils in their class remain safe and supervised by closing the doors, moving them to a different classroom or asking a different member of staff to supervise them
- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Principal/Member of the SLT and their Line Manager (if a different person) immediately.
- Other staff that can be released should be notified and start to conduct a thorough search of the school premises, notifying Principle/SLT if the child is found.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- the following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - The library

- Any outbuildings
  - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
  - A member of the SLT will contact the Police using 999 to report the child missing 5 minutes after they are alerted including a description of the child's appearance, any special needs and child protection issues. They will then print a copy of the child's photo off Arbour.
  - If the parents/carers are not present at the time, they should be contacted by the SLT once a thorough search of the premises has been completed and asked to come to school immediately.
  - The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- 14.3. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 14.4. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- 14.5. The Principal will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 14.6. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- 14.7. The Principal will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 14.8. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed
- 14.9. Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence without contact will be handled in accordance with clauses 6.6-6.8 of this policy.
- 14.10. A written reports will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcomes.

## 15. Religious observances

- 15.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- 15.2. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance

## **16. Appointments**

- 16.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 16.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.
- 16.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent.
- 16.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

## **17. Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities**

- 17.1. Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence(s).
- 17.2. Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance is required to request a licence from the LA.
- 17.3. The organiser is required to allow sufficient time for the LA to process the request – the LA will refuse to consider an application if the performance or activity is less than 21 days away.
- 17.4. The LA will only approve a licence application once it is satisfied that:
  - The pupil's education, health and wellbeing will not suffer; and
  - The conditions of the licence will be observed.
- 17.5. The LA will impose any conditions it considers necessary to ensure that the pupil is fit to take part in the performance/activity, that there will be

proper provision for the pupil's wellbeing, and that the pupil's education will not suffer.

- 17.6. The school will make additional arrangements for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.
- 17.7. The organiser of the performance/activity is responsible for ensuring these arrangements are carried out.
- 17.8. The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence.
- 17.9. The above requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:
  - For not less than six hours a week; and
  - During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
  - On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
  - For not more than five hours on any such day.
- 17.10. Where the applicant is unable to specify the dates of the performance/activity, and the LA decides to grant the application, the LA will specify that the pupil can only take part in the activity for a specified number of days within a six-month period.
- 17.11. Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation is needed from the school.
- 17.12. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Principal to authorise the leave of absence for each day.
- 17.13. The Principal will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent.
- 17.14. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Principal will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.



- 17.15. The LA will be satisfied that arrangements for chaperones, accommodation, place of performance and rehearsal, and travel are suitable before it grants the application.
- 17.16. The LA may decide to place restrictions on any performance or activity – this can include maximum hours and breaks.
- 17.17. The maximum number of consecutive days that a child can perform is six – this applies to performances only.
- 17.18. Pupils who perform are entitled to a break of at least 14 days following the last performance where the pupil has been performing on the maximum number of consecutive days over a period of eight weeks, unless the period to which the licence applies is less than 60 days.
- 17.19. A licence is also required where a pupil will be absent from school and conducting a performance or activity abroad.
- 17.20. The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements; they may carry out inspections of the premises:
- Where rehearsals during the performance period are taking place;
  - Where performances or activities are taking place; or
  - Where the pupil is receiving their education, in order to check that licensing conditions are being met.
- 17.21. The LA has the power to amend or revoke existing licences at any time.
- 17.22. If the LA refuses to grant a licence, it will provide reasons for this decision in writing to the individual/organisation applying for the licence.
- 17.23. The organiser of the performance/activity has the right to appeal the decision to a magistrates' court, including its refusal, revocation or variation, and against any condition under which a licence is granted or an approval is given.

## **18. Young Carers**

- 18.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- 18.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.

- 18.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

## **19. Rewarding good attendance**

The school acknowledges good attendance following ways:

**SEE APPENDIX 1**

## **20. Monitoring and review**

- 20.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 20.2. Willow Tree Primary School's attendance target is 95 percent.
- 20.3. Details of our absence levels can be found on our website and Newsletters.
- 20.4. This policy is reviewed every year by the Principal; the next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2024.
- 20.5. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

## Appendix 1



# Willow Tree's Attendance Celebrations



### Daily

Class has 100% attendance - Each child receives a dojo point



### Weekly

Attendance celebration assembly

Child with 100% attendance - Child receives a celebration sticker

Class has 100% attendance - Each child receives a bag of Haribo

Class with the highest attendance – Yellow star towards own clothes day



### Half Termly

Pupil has 98% attendance and above - Certificate and surprise activity

Pupil with most improved attendance – Certificate and surprise activity.

Class who has collected most yellow star – Own Clothes day.



### Annually

Pupil has 98% attendance and above – Certificate and surprise school day out/event funded by school

Most improved attendance – Certificate and surprise day out/event funded by school

## Appendix 2



# Willow Tree's Attendance Support Plan



### Initial Support

Daily Face to Face Welcome on the school gate with open door policy to address any barriers to attendance.

First Day response calls and texts and home visit if no contact made. A Letter posted on the visit requesting contact to be made. If no contact made the Principal will assess if a welfare visit from the Police is required



### Attendance identified as a concern or at risk of becoming a concern

Regular and timely contacts out to parents/carers to inform them of their child's attendance %, level of concern and offering support.

Request Medical evidence for all absences over 90% to enable authorisation.

Invite to Attendance Panel Meeting.

Penalty Warning Letter/Penalty Notice Utilised.

Regular PA and At Risk of PA letters issued.

School Health referral offered.

Team Around the Family Meeting offered.

Family Plan/Early Help Assessment offered.



### Non engagement with school actions offered.

Follow the Actions from the Knowsley Attendance Strategy Guidance flowchart