



Windlesham School
& Nursery



Attendance Policy

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1 Introduction

At Windlesham we recognise the crucial importance of regular school attendance. We consider this to be an integral part of developing successful learners and preparing our pupils for the wider world. Pupils must attend school regularly and punctually to achieve their potential, develop their skills and make the most of the opportunities on offer at school. Regular attendance at school also helps develop a positive working ethos, early in life.

Research has shown that there is strong and proven link between school attendance, academic achievement, well-being and life chances. Recent government guidance highlights the fact that pupils with the highest attainment at the end of both the primary and secondary phases have higher rates of attendance compared to those with the lowest attendance. - **Working Together to Improve School Attendance Sept 22**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63049617e90e0729e63d3953/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

Government legislation requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives full time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. Where parents have decided to have their child registered at a school, they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends regularly.

At Windlesham there are 174 school days. This means there are 191 non school days. Every school day is packed with learning opportunities and every day of absence means missed learning.

2 Aims of the policy

- To promote good attendance
- To reduce absence
- To ensure every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- To promote and support punctuality
- To build strong relationships with families to support good attendance and punctuality

3 What is good attendance?

Good attendance over the course of a year is **95%** or above. This equates to no more than **9 days absence**.

Poor attendance, also called persistent absence is **90%** or lower. This equates to **18 days or more absence**.

Severe absence is **50%** or lower, equating to **87 days absence**.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable or has been agreed in advance by the school

Types of Absence

The school day is split in half, into a morning and afternoon session. Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

- **Authorised absences** – are absences which are for a good reason e.g. illness, medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in school time), emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

- **Unauthorised absences** - are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given e.g. parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily, absence without reason, truancy, children arriving late (after the close of registration), celebrating birthdays and unauthorised holidays.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be absent or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness of the pupil or unavoidable cause. We follow Department for Education guidance and it is the school's policy that we will not grant leave of absence, unless in very exceptional circumstances. Any application must be made two school weeks (where possible) in advance and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. Exceptional circumstances are not precisely defined by their nature, but compassionate consideration will be given to issues of specific family need. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Other authorised absences include:

- Present at an approved off-site educational activity
- Educational trip or visit
- Off site sporting activity
- Religious observance
- Visit to/interview with another educational establishment
- Medical or dental appointments – we ask that where possible, routine appointments do not take place during the school day. Where this is not possible, we ask that children are out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
- Illness: All children are ill on occasions and when this is the case, home is the best place to be. However, it is sometimes difficult for parents/carers to know if they should send their child to school when they are feeling off form. The following is a guide to help parents/carers to recognise when to send their child to school and when to keep them at home. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/> When a child comes to school on a day when they are not feeling well, please inform the school so we can keep an eye on them. We will monitor them at school and will contact you if we feel your child is not well enough to be at school.

Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. This includes:

- Holiday or family event not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher
- Reason for absence not given. We will follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort is made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence.
- Attendance at school after registration closed
- Keeping children off school unnecessarily

4 Parent/Carer responsibilities

- To ensure your child attends school regularly – the aim is for 95% or higher attendance
- To ensure your child is punctual – This means arriving at school between 8.10 and 8.50
- To ensure family events and holidays take place outside of term time
- To let the school office know your when your child is ill on the first day of absence and on every subsequent day by 9 a.m.
- To communicate any ongoing issues with attendance and punctuality with the school and to work in partnership with the school to secure good attendance for your child
- To ensure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date

5 School Responsibilities

- To take accurate attendance registers twice daily
- To follow up on unnotified absence in a timely manner – by 10 a.m. on the morning of the first absence and every morning of unnotified absence thereafter
- To monitor attendance patterns throughout the school and report them regularly to the Governing Body
- To notify relevant authorities where children are absent or missing in education
- To work in partnership with parents to establish good attendance habits

6 School Procedures

- Where attendance falls consistently below 95% within a half term, an **attendance letter** will be sent to parents
- Where attendance falls below 90%, within a half term, an **attendance meeting** with the headteacher or SLT member will be arranged and an **attendance agreement** will be set up
- Where despite the two above procedures, attendance fails to improve and/or attendance falls in to the severe absence stage, this may be deemed a safeguarding issue and the safeguarding lead will be informed

Attendance	Procedure	Outcome
Below 95%	Attendance letter to Parents/carers	Attendance expected to improve
Below 90%	Attendance meeting with headteacher/SLT	Attendance Agreement drawn up and targets for attendance agreed

Persistent absence (below 90% despite Attendance Agreement) or severe absence (below 50%)	Refer to Safeguarding Lead	Safeguarding Lead to take appropriate action
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