

# **Windmill Primary School**

## **Attendance Policy 2024**



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### 1. Aims

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Creating a happy and safe environment which pupils like to come to each day.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### 2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy works to meet the mandatory requirements laid out in [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

### 3 Attendance register and Understanding Types of Absence

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required..

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. If this occurs, school will require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

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 the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- excessive illness without medical evidence

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 resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, never cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bedtimes
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with your the school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

### **3.2 Persistent Absenteeism**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any child that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan if appropriate, and the plan may include allocation of additional support through a Mentor or an TA, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance team. If your child becomes a PA pupil, we may seek your consent to complete a Strengths and Needs form with you and consider convening a Team Around the Family.

### 3.3 Severe Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing significant damage to any child's academic and social progress which can have lifelong consequences. All SA pupils at our school will have an Individual Attendance Plan which will incorporate multi-agency input. You will be expected to engage with all partners to improve your child's attendance to 96+%. SA pupils are our highest priority at our school.

## 4. School procedures

### 4.1 Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

### 4.2 To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular weekly newsletter.
- Report to you four times a year, either through in-person parent interviews or through written reports, on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance.

### 4.3 Unplanned Absence Procedures

#### 4.4 If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence with the reason for the nonattendance.
- Or you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.
- Be honest about the reason for absence including if you are on holiday

#### 4.5 If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Visit you at home if we have not heard from you by day 3 of absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher / Pastoral lead if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90% if appropriate.

### 4.6 Medical or dental appointments

- Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.
- However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- Parents can notify the school in advance of a medical or dental appointment using email, verbal or written notification to the office.
- Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance to the headteacher. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

## 5. How we manage lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

### 5.1 How we manage time keeping:

- The school day starts at 8:40 **a.m.** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. If your child arrives to school and registration as expected, they will receive a present mark (**I**)
- Registers are marked by 8:45**am.** and your child will receive a late mark (**L**) if they are not in by that time.
- A late mark will be awarded at 9:00am
- At 9:10am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark (**U**) that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- Whilst there is no mandatory time for afternoon registration, the school will seek to take the register directly following the lunchtime period at 12:45pm for Reception pupils, 1:05pm for Key Stage 1 pupils and 1:25pm for Key Stage 2 pupils in order to support safeguarding and early identification of pupils who are Late to return or whom do not return. If your child is present for this registration they will be marked (**\**)
- If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with a member of the School Leadership Team to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

## 6. Exceptional Leave and Legal Sanctions

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

- It is widely known that the link between a pupil's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
- Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment.
- All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising requests for holidays.
- The Head Teacher or designated representative will meet personally with every family applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
- Exceptional leave is most unlikely to be authorised when a pupil's attendance is less than 96%.
- Exceptional leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
- Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
- Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised leave of absence. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Payment within 21 days of

receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. Please note that it will be per parent per child.

If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days you may each receive a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated the County Attendance Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## **7. Reporting to parents**

The school will report to you four times a year on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments. This information may be through parent interviews or written reports.

## **8.Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance**

Good attendance is encouraged by:-

- The school being welcoming and making children / parents feel that they are valued.
- Informing parents about the impact of missing school / being late on attainment.
- Working closely with families who are struggling to get their child / children to school.
- Sending a "thank you" postcard to parents / carers who have supported their children in improving their attendance.

## **9 Attendance monitoring**

- The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.
- Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.
- Parents are expected to make a call daily unless the child has an identified illness which requires a period of time out of school ie chicken pox where the parents know they will be off for the whole week. Then they should inform us of this in the initial phone call.
- If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.
- If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an Attendance officer.
- The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.
- Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.
- Attendance data is stored on SIMs.
- Monthly official register report is printed (but not used to monitor attendance) Weekly report given to Headteacher with any pupils under 95% attendance.

- If a child's attendance falls below the 90% threshold a letter will be sent to the parents / carers requesting a meeting to discuss a support programme. The attendance of these pupils is tracked weekly. If attendance continues to fall a parental contract will be put in place. An improvement in attendance generates a postcard home.

## **10. Roles and responsibilities**

All members of the Windmill School Community have responsibility for supporting good attendance.

### **10.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **10.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **10.3 The attendance officer**

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

### **10.4 Class Teachers**

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **10.5 Support Staff**

- Support staff help pupils by creating a safe and welcoming environment. They also support transitioning into school when a pupil is struggling to come into school in the morning.

### **10.6 Reception staff**

- Reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

### **10.7 The County Attendance Team**

- Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at Oxfordshire County Council for consideration of legal proceedings.
- At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, Or take action via a Non-Attendance referral, the legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).
- The County Attendance Team, with the school, will encourage you to engage with a Strengths and Needs form. Education Supervision Orders may be discussed with you to support rapidly improved attendance.
- Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.
- Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will

give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513  
[attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **11. Summary**

The school has a legal duty to report and publish its absence figures & it's attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to Oxfordshire County Council, & the Department for Education. Our school is obliged to share all attendance data daily with our Oxfordshire County Council and the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly and on time.

We have a lead Governor who scrutinises our attendance arrangements on behalf of all our pupils.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment, mental health and social well- being.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## **12. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
C2	Part time timetable in place to support SEND needs.	Leave of absence - compulsory school age pupil subject to part time table to support them in coming to school.
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
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