

# WINDHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

FLYING HIGH FOR EXCELLENCE



## Attendance Policy



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Approved by:	Lynn Mathers
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Role:	Chair of Governors
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## 1. RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

Windhill Primary School believes that every child has a fundamental right to be educated; good attendance is essential if children are to gain the maximum benefit from school in acquiring the educational and social skills to equip them for life.

We aim to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, parents/ carers, the Educational Welfare Service and all other appropriate agencies can work together in partnership.

This policy has been created in-line with recommendations from statutory guidance:

- *Working Together to improve School Attendance*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- *Children Missing Education*
- *Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions*

### **The importance of regular attendance:**

For pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, on time and every day that the school is open. Pupils should only be absent if it is completely unavoidable.

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

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

**Safeguarding:** Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend the school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend the School on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

## 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Pupil Responsibilities:**

- They will attend the school every day it is open, achieving a minimum of 97% or above attendance, unless they are genuinely ill
- They will be appropriately prepared for the day

### **Parent/ Carer responsibilities:**

- To ensure all pupils attend the school regularly and on time
- To ensure they contact the school immediately whenever their child is unable to attend, using the dedicated attendance telephone number 01709 586949.
- To ensure that their child is appropriately prepared for the day
- To contact the school in confidence whenever they have a problem concerning attendance or punctuality
- Not to arrange a holiday in term time
- To respond to any attendance letters of concern immediately
- To make every effort to arrange dental and medical appointments out of the school day
- That telephone contact numbers are available and if changed, the school is informed immediately.

### **Windhill Primary Schools responsibilities:**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- The Admin Assistant will note all registration marks in SIMS by 09:15.
- Registration will be used to:
  - identify patterns of non-attendance at an early stage
  - resolve personal/social difficulties where possible
  - provide an effective and efficient system for the monitoring of attendance.
- Voicemails must be listened to and acted upon by 09:45. Emails will also be checked.
- Any child whose whereabouts are unknown must be followed up by 10:15. All adults on the child's contact list must be called.
- Immediate response to problems notified to us
- Celebrate and reward good and improving attendance through competitions, certificates and outings/events
- Support when there is a problem of long term illness
- School will send a letter out to all families at the start of each year clearly outlining the school's expectations for attendance.
- To keep parents/ carers informed of their child's attendance on a termly basis
- All attendance below 95% will be monitored.

### **Governor responsibilities**

The Governors of the school have a responsibility for setting an annual attendance target before December 31<sup>st</sup> in each academic year and reviews the Attendance Policy annually.

### **3. THE LAW RELATING TO ATTENDANCE**

*Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 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*

- *In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child **within any three-year period**, this will be charged at the higher rate of **£160**. Furthermore, the Education Act 1996 and subsequent amendments to legislation give schools and local authorities the powers to take legal action against parents to enforce attendance at the school they are registered to attend.*

#### **4. THE LAW RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING**

*Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and pupils under the age of 18.*

#### **5. ILLNESS**

- If your child feels ill in the morning please provide them with appropriate pain relief/medication and send them to school. Any prescribed medication should be handed in to the school office, alongside signed consent, who will administer it when required. Your child should be in school if they have a minor illness such as a headache, cold or sore throat. (Refer to Managing Medicines Policy).
- If your child is too ill to attend, then please ring the school office to notify school of any absence. Please ensure that your child returns to the school as soon as possible.

#### **6. MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

A full day's absence will not be authorised for a medical appointment. Please arrange all appointments outside the school day. If the appointment is unavoidable, your child must come to school before and after the appointment. Appointments cards/ confirmation text messages must be shown to the office staff.

#### **7. REQUEST FOR ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL IN TERM TIME (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1257)**

- There is no entitlement to parents to remove their child from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time. From August 2024, if a parent takes their child on holiday they will be fined £80 per child. This will increase to £160 if not paid within 21 days. If it is not paid at all then court proceedings will take place.

- In the case of repeated fines, if a parent/ carer receives a second fine for the same child within any 3-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.
- In line with Government guidance, Parents or Carers may apply to the school for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for which written evidence should be provided.
- Holidays in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances for which written evidence should be provided.
- *In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child **within any three-year period**, this will be charged at the higher rate of **£160**.* evidence should be provided.
- Request forms for any period of absence due to exceptional circumstances (including requests involving holidays) must be returned to school at least 14 days before the requested start of the absence.
- Returning the form does not guarantee that the request will be approved.
- Once a decision has been made by the Headteacher (or a delegated person) no further correspondence will be entered into.
- The Headteacher (or delegated person) has the authority, through current legislation, to decide whether or not to authorise any absence taken in term time.
- Absence following unapproved requests will be unauthorised. If the total number of unauthorised absences is for 10 or more sessions i.e. 5 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued by Doncaster Council.
- A Fixed Penalty Notice process may be commenced following an unauthorised absence where there is considerable concern regarding a student's attendance: this action may be triggered if the student has reached stage 3 in the school's attendance monitoring procedure.

## **8. CELEBRATING AND REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

Good and improved attendance is rewarded by the school with various incentives for individual pupils, classes and whole school. These include:

- Each week it will be calculated which class has the highest percentage of attendance over the week and this will be announced in Friday's assembly. The winning class in each key stage will be presented with the attendance trophy and a sweet treat. The class with the overall highest percentage across school will be rewarded with a non-uniform day the following Friday.
- Each week, every child with 100% attendance will be entered into a prize draw to receive an additional reward.
- Attendance will be celebrated and promoted on the newsletter to parents on the school website/ Class Dojo. Parents/ carers will also receive half termly updates of their child's attendance.
- Attendance will be monitored half termly. At the end of every half term we will reward all children with 100% attendance.

## **9. RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE**

Where we have had no contact from a parent/carer the school will respond in the following manner:

- First day telephone contact will be implemented for all pupils by 10:15am, further attempts at communication may also be made. On different days throughout the week, members of the staff may visit any child who is absent from school
- With continued non-attendance (<95%) the case will be brought to the attention of the Attendance Officer. An Awareness Letter (Letter 1) will be sent home expressing school's initial concerns.
- If a parent is continually claiming the absences are due to illness, a request for confirmation the child was not well enough to attend can be requested from medical practitioners such as doctors or hospital consultants.
- Pupils whose attendance falls to 90% will be contacted by the Attendance Officer and invited to attend an Attendance Meeting where an agreed action plan will be created. If appropriate, other agencies may be invited in an attempt to identify and solve the problems which are preventing the pupil from attending school
- Attendance will continue to be monitored for a further 6 weeks with meetings taking place every 2 weeks. If attendance has not improved, you will be required to attend school for a further meeting with the Headteacher, where an Education Penalty Notice may be issued..
- If improved attendance has not been secured following the application of all school attendance support systems; and where parents have failed to engage with the processes; the case may be referred to the Local Authority Attendance & Pupil Welfare Service, who may issue a fixed penalty notice or begin legal procedure regarding an Attendance Order.
- Penalty Notices will be issued by Doncaster Council to the parents of a child where any of the following occur:
  - The child has had 10 sessions, or more, of absence in a period not exceeding 13 weeks and meets the terms of a prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, and the school or Doncaster Council has previously issued a warning letter (Letter 1) giving the opportunity to improve attendance over a specified period.
  - The child has 10 sessions of unauthorised leave of absence in term time and the Headteacher has advised the parent in writing that the leave of absence does not constitute the Headteacher's view of an exceptional circumstance.
  - The child has taken leave of absence in term time of not less than 10 sessions, without parents requesting authorisation from the school.
  - Exclusion has taken place and the parent has allowed the child to be present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of a fixed or permanent exclusion.
- Penalty notices will be issued to each parent for each child. The exception to this would be where a parent has taken a child on unauthorised leave of absence without the consent of the other parent.

The school recognises that some children may be absent for long periods due to unavoidable circumstances:

- Re-integration – the return of a pupil to the school after long term absence requires special planning. The school will work closely with parent carers to integrate pupils back into school after a long term illness/absence.

#### **10. TYPES OF ABSENCE:**

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 an absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the school for a good reason like genuine 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 "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school and or the local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Holidays in term time.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular non-attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, excusing them from attending makes the situation worse as it gives the impression that attendance does not matter.

#### **Persistent absence:**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level damages a child's educational prospects.

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

The table below illustrates the number of absent sessions over the year, broken down into half terms, which would lead to a pupil becoming a persistent or severely absentee.

Absence Sessions	Terms	Average Absence 5% or Less	Persistent Absence 10% or More	Severely Absence 50% or More
Half Term 1	Autumn Term	3	7	35
Half Term 2		7	14	70
Half Term 3	Spring Term	10	20	95
Half Term 4		13	26	125
Half Term 5	Summer Term	16	31	150
Half Term 6		19	38	190

*Please note that 2 sessions equate to 1 school day.*

## 11. ABSENCE PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS/ CARERS

### If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and each subsequent day by ringing the school on 01709 586949.

### Personal Details

It is vital that parental details are correct. There are times when we need to contact parents/carers to discuss absence or more importantly to contact a parent in the event of an emergency. Personal information check sheets are distributed at the start of the year and it is the expectation that parents notify the school of any changes in personal contact details.

### Moving to a different school

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school they must inform Windhill Primary School as soon as possible. **Your child/children must continue their education with the school** until their start date at the new school. Schools/academies may be reluctant to take a child onto roll where attendance is low and so it is imperative that they continue to attend.

A pupil will not be removed from the schools roll until we have received confirmation that they have started at the new school and the following information has been received and investigated.

- The date the pupil is leaving Windhill Primary School and starting a new school
- The address of the new school and confirmation from that school that the pupil has been admitted.
- The new home address.

The pupils' school record will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the case of movement abroad records will be provided for the pupil to take with them.

In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Local Authority as a 'Child Missing Education'.

The School will complete a 'Common Transfer File' (CTF) for all pupils leaving the school for another school/school.

### **New pupils**

Any parent wishing to apply for a place at Windhill Primary School may do so following our admissions policy.