**Winchester House School**

**Attendance Policy**

Version 1

Responsible Governor: Will Jakeman

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4th December 2024 (AB)

Adopted by Governors: n/a

Next review due: 4th December 2025 (AB)

Attendance Policy

# Contents

# 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance

- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.

- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

# 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- School census guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education

- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

# 3. Roles and responsibilities

## 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

## 3.2 The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher Pastoral

The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher Pastoral is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

## 3.3 The Deputy Headteacher Pastoral responsible for attendance

The Deputy Headteacher Pastoral is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Deputy Headteacher Pastoral responsible for attendance is **Andre Beukes** and can be contacted via andre.beukes@winchester-house.org or on 01280 846473

## 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.

The attendance officer is **Andre Beukes** and can be contacted via andre.beukes@winchester-house.org or on 01280 846473

## 3.5 Form tutors/Class teachers

Form tutors/class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 3pm daily.

## 3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Deputy Head Pastoral in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

## 3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence) and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

## 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day on time.

**School starting age:**

Please note that most children start Reception full-time in September after their fourth birthday, for example, if the child turns 4 in June, they'll usually start school in September that same year. If parents do not think their child is ready to start school in September, they can start later, for example, if the child only turns 4 in August, parents might decide to wait before sending them to school. But they must be in full-time education by the time they reach 'compulsory school age'.

They can start:

- Part-time
- part-way through the year
- In the next school year, in the September after they turn 5

**Compulsory school age:**

Children must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first. If the child's fifth birthday is on one of those dates, then they reach compulsory school age on that date. For example, if your child reaches compulsory school age on 31 March, they must start full-time education at the beginning of the next term (summer term that year)

# 4. Recording attendance

## 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.


We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:40am on each school day.

The Upper School register for the first session will be taken at **8:30am** and will be kept open until **8:40am** The register for the afternoon session will be taken for **Years 3 and 4 at 13:00- 13:45** and then for **Years 5 – 8 at 13:55 -14:45.**

**The Bradshaw register for the first session will be taken at 9am. The Register for the afternoon session will be taken at 13.20.**

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible by calling the school office. (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed it will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed you will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

## 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

# 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

## 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

## 7.1 Monitoring attendance

Winchester House will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

## 7.2 Analysing attendance.

Winchester House will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

## 7.3 Using data to improve attendance.

Winchester House will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to the form tutors and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

## 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence.

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum once a year by the Deputy Headteacher Pastoral.

## 9. Links with other policies

- This policy links to:  Child protection and safeguarding policy

  and                       Behaviour 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 |
| **J** | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment/future school |
| **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 |
|------|-----------|----------|
| **Authorised absence** | | |
| **C** | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **E** | Suspended or 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 |
| **I** | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| **M** | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **S** | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| **T** | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |

| | Unauthorised absence | |
|---|---|---|
| **G** | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| **N** | 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) |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence/ unknown circumstances | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| **U** | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---|---|---|
| **X** | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| **Y1** | 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 |
| **Y2** | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency. |
| **Y3** | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed | Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use. |
| **Y4** | Unable to attend due to whole school site being unexpectedly closed | Due to adverse weather. |
| **Y5** | Unable to attend as a pupil is in criminal justice detention | The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are: In police detention. |

| **Z** | 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 |