



Pupil Attendance Policy

Date Ratified:

Chair, Board of Governors:

Renewal Date:



Attendance Policy

Introduction

This policy should be considered in conjunction with other relevant Pastoral Care Policies and Circular 2013/09, Circular 2016/22, Circular 2017/14, 2018/12, Circular 2019/14, - Updated Circular 2021/16-Updated: 17 January 202, Circular 2022/07

“At Willowbridge School we recognise that each pupil is an individual and every child has the right to succeed. Through working as a team, we aim to help the pupils grow, develop and experience happiness and fun in their time in school”.

Willowbridge School Mission Statement

In Willowbridge..

...” we provide a happy, safe, nurturing environment in which all children are encouraged to grow, learn, develop and succeed in all aspects of life. We aim to achieve this through strong partnerships and committed relationships between school, family and the wider community.”

Willowbridge School Ethos Statement

Aims

Willowbridge School aims to ensure that every child will want to attend. This will be achieved by creating a warm, welcoming and secure atmosphere where pupils feel valued, and a stimulating curriculum delivered in a clean, bright and attractive environment.

Willowbridge School aims:

1. To improve and maintain the overall attendance of pupils.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

Regular attendance and punctuality are crucial to the effective delivery of the curriculum and to the educational, social, emotional and spiritual development of each child. It is also crucial in raising standards in Education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential.

Absence from a class without a reason counts as unsatisfactory attendance.

Good attendance is encouraged and relevant information is communicated to parents through school reports, parent interviews, and home/school communication system e.g. Class Dojo, emails.

Children should only be absent from school if the reason is unavoidable. All absences must be accompanied by a note of explanation from the parent/guardian of the child. Parents may also phone the Secretary, Form Teacher or use the home/school communication system e.g. Class Dojo, emails.

Effective communication between home and school is important, especially in dealing with any difficulties over attendance which may arise.

The school will liaise with the Education Welfare Service of the Education Authority.

Absence Procedures

1. If a child is absent from school, parents/guardians are requested to contact the school by telephone preferably by the third day of absence to explain the circumstances of the absence. If no message has been received to explain the absence, contact with home may be made at this point.
2. Any child requesting absence from school for part of a day or for a whole day or days their parent/guardian must seek permission by using the home/school communication system e.g. Class Dojo, emails, giving the reason/s for the request. This request may also be made by ringing the school.

In relation to medical, dental, optical or other such appointments, a letter, phone call or a message, using the home/school communication system, from the Parent/Guardian giving details of the date and time of the appointment, is required.

3. Parents should aim to notify the school office by phone if their child is likely to be late arriving to school. Any child arriving late should report to the school office on arrival.
4. Willowbridge School discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

"Extended Leave" allows pupils, for a limited period only (ideally no more than three weeks), to travel outside the UK without their attendance levels being adversely affected. Family holidays either agreed or not agreed are not to be recorded as "extended leave". Extended Leave may be used for the following purposes:

- Short-term parental placement/employment outside the UK
- A need to leave the UK for a specific complex family need such as:
 - the death of a relative;
 - to care for a sick relative;
 - a sibling or parent receiving medical treatment outside NI;
 - or to attend to immigration matters.

For this code to be used, the family concerned must make an application to the school, outlining the reasons for the request and the proposed period of extended leave. Each request should be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the circumstances for which leave is sought, the pupil's attendance (and attainment) to date, previous similar requests and whether or not the pupil's specific needs will be met (both personally and academically) during the proposed absence.

5. Parents/guardians must use the home/school communication system e.g. Class Dojo or email if their child has been absent from school because of illness or some other unforeseen emergency. They should let their Form Teacher/Class teacher know on the FIRST day the child returns to school.
6. Form Teachers/Class teachers will monitor the pupils attendance. If there are reoccurring absences a note is made in the pupils "Pastoral Monitoring Record. If this becomes a concern the Form Teacher/Class Teacher should make the Head of Pastoral Care aware that the attendance is being monitored. The Form Teacher/class teacher should ring the Parents/Guardian to discuss their child's attendance.

The Head of Pastoral Care will monitor the attendance every month. If attendance falls to 90% a letter may be sent out. See Appendix 2 (a) and 2 (b)

If, after contact has been made with the Parent/guardian by phone and then by letter. Attendance continues to fall an Education Welfare Referral (Appendix 3) may be made.

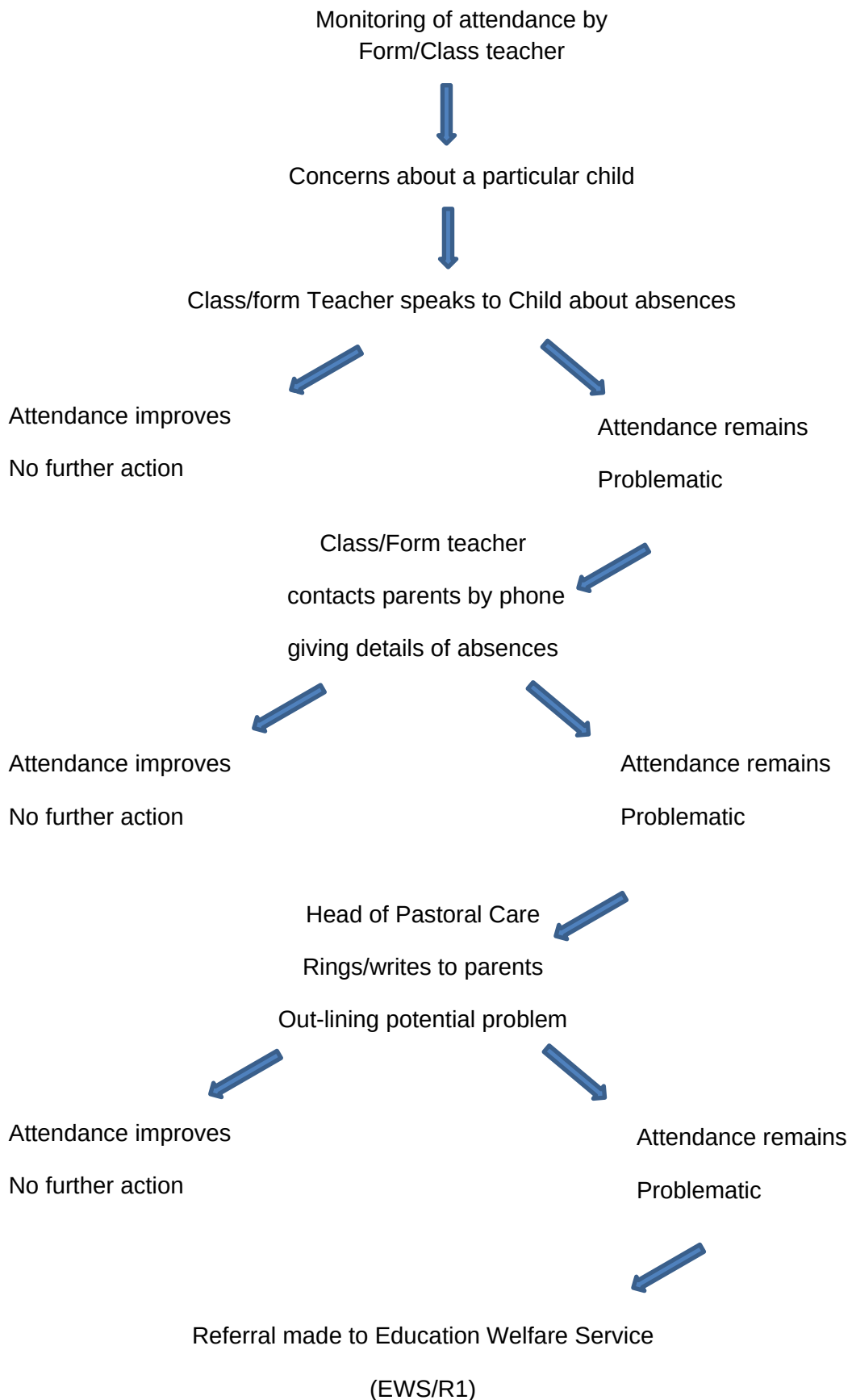
7. Referral to the Education Welfare service.

In situations where there are significant concerns about a pupil's attendance, a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be considered. The procedures to be followed are set out in Appendix 1.

These procedures will be followed in the vast majority of cases but there may be occasions when individual circumstances require a different approach. At all times the action taken by the school, in consultation with the Education Welfare Service, will seek to ensure that the best interests of the pupil are fulfilled

Appendix 1

Procedures for Non-Attendance in Willowbridge School



Appendix 2 (a)

Sample letter to Parents

00/00/0000

Dear Mr & Mrs X,

I am writing in relation to Pupil A's attendance at school. To date her/his attendance is xx %. Pupil A is a bright and capable young lady/man and poor attendance will hinder her/his progress here in school.

If Pupil A's attendance fails to improve then a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service at the Education Authority.

Should you wish to discuss this any further do not hesitate to contact me here at school.

Regards

Joanne Gray

Head of Pastoral Care

Appendix 2(b)

Sample letter to Parents of Post 16 Pupils

00/00/0000

Dear Mr & Mrs X,

I am writing in relation to Pupil A's attendance at school. To date her/his attendance is xx%. Pupil A is a bright and capable young lady/man and poor attendance will hinder her/his progress here in school. Your child is doing accredited courses and poor attendance may affect her/his progress towards her/his qualification.

Should you wish to discuss this any further do not hesitate to contact me here at school.

Regards

Joanne Gray

Head of Pastoral Care

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE REFERRAL FORM

Before making the referral to the Education Welfare Service please, ensure that you have discussed the referral with the link Education Welfare Officer for the school or the Senior Education Welfare Officer for the area.

Have you read the Partnership Working Agreement and guidance prior to making this referral

Is this a re-referral:

Is this child Looked After (subject to care proceedings)

Referred by:

Other:

School Name:

Year Group:

Child's Name:

Date of Birth:

Gender: **Ethnicity:** **SEN:**

Language: **Home Language:**

Address:

Postcode:

Name of those with parental responsibility including relationship to the child:

Name:

Relationship:

Name:

Relationship:

Details of main contact:

Mobile: Click or tap here to enter text. **Home:** Click or tap here to enter text.

Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Known communication difficulties (i.e. language) Choose an item.

Is an interpreter required and which language? Choose an item. Click or tap here to enter text.

Please provide details of family GP and any other services or agencies involved with the pupil. This includes statutory, voluntary and support services as well as other Education Authority.

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Contact Name</u>	<u>Address / contact details</u>	<u>Length of involvement</u>

Parent / Carer must be notified that referral is being made.

Please note that referrals will not be accepted without the family having been informed unless in exceptional circumstances.

How/when was parent / carer notified? Choose an item. **Other Please Specify:** Click or tap here to enter text.

Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

For this referral to be accepted by the Education Welfare Service you must have exhausted all procedures to address concerns regarding attendance, this is in line with the school's attendance policy.

Please provide evidence below of the engagement (or attempts to engage) with parents/carers and work that has been carried out to address the pupils attendance. Registration certificates must be up to date and accurate.

Please give details of any contact and support the school has had with the parents / carers regarding the current low attendance. (Dates of meetings, letters sent attempts to telephone)

[Please enter your text here.]

Please identify the concerns you have regarding the poor school attendance. (Welfare concerns, bullying, transition, social and emotional, school age mother etc.)

Please provide any additional information you feel is useful. (Identify any special needs, known to SENCO or Education Psychologist, code of practice, social difficulties or child protection concerns etc.)

If

[Please enter your text here.]

the majority of the absence has been recorded as illness has the school asked for medical evidence:
Choose an item.

Checklist:

Registration certificates

Choose an item.

Evidence of interventions

Choose an item.

Letter/contact informing parent / carer of referral

Choose an item.

Referrals to other agencies

Choose an item.

Medical evidence

Choose an item.

Print name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Designation: Click or tap here to enter text.

Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Date received: Click or tap to enter a date.

Date Allocated: Click or tap to enter a date.

EWO: Click or tap here to enter text.

Appendix 2 (C)

Sample letter to Parents/ Guardians about the importance of Good Attendance

(To include the Miss School=Miss Out Leaflet from the Department of Education)

Xx/September/xx

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In Willowbridge School we believe that regular attendance is very important so that every child can grow, develop and experience happiness and fun during their time in school. Willowbridge has a responsibility for the attendance of all our pupils and we have the support of the Education welfare service. Their task is to assist the school's efforts on behalf of the education authority.

When a child's attendance falls below 85% we are required by the Education Welfare Service to provide reasons for this absence. If no reasons can be given then our Education Welfare officer has to be notified. To assist us with this, we request that you do the following:

When your child returns after a day's absence or a period of absence, please send in a note to Class/form teacher via Class Dojo or email and should -

- A. Show the **date** your child was absent
- B. Show the **reason** why they were absent

Parents may also phone the school to let us have this information.

We would appreciate your co-operation and if you have any questions in relation to your son/daughter's attendance please contact me at school.

Regards

Joanne Gray

Head of Pastoral Care

