



THE WINDMILLS JUNIOR SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Reviewed: November 2025

Date of Next Review: November 2026

Policy aims

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This policy aims to safeguard children by ensuring that they attend school regularly and when they do not attend, school is aware of the reason for absence.

DFE Expectations as set out in "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" August 2024

'The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.'

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.'

To enable children to achieve all they are capable of, it is essential that they attend school regularly and punctually.

The government expects:

- schools and local authorities to:
 - Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
 - Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
 - Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
 - Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
 - Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
 - Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
 - Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.
- Parents/carers to:
 - perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
 - Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
 - Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
 - Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Governing bodies of maintained schools to:
 - Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
 - Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

This policy has due regard to the DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#)” August 2024 which summarises legal powers and duties that govern school attendance.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.
- Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

Arrival and registration

The law requires all schools to have an attendance register that is taken twice a day. A day counts as two attendances. The school day starts at 8:40 and the register will be taken at 8:50. Morning registration ends at 9.00 am. If a child arrives after registration period he/she will be marked as late. The afternoon register is taken at 1.00 pm.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/ guardian, outside the normal hours, are signed in/out at the office. Fire Registers held in the classroom will be amended to reflect a child's attendance and it is vital it is kept up to date in case of fire.

Registers may be interrogated by Education Welfare Officers to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and incidence of high rates of absences. These are legal documents and can be used in court.

Illness

The school office should **be informed by 9.00 am on the morning of the first day of your child's absence** through illness, and then **each morning** for the duration of the absence using [STUDYBUGS](#). If you have not contacted school, you will receive a text message or phone call asking why your child is not at school. If the reason for the absence is not explained, or if the reason does not comply with acceptable absences, then the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Parents/carers will be reminded of the importance of good attendance and punctuality where this is not in line with expectations on an individual basis. The Headteacher will speak to parents where there is a concern, informally at first and then more formally by an arranged meeting and follow up letter.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents/carers to provide 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 about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Good attendance means that your child will be able to get the most out of school and make the most of the opportunities offered to them. Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.

Medical appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment. If the appointment is in the middle of the day they should come to school in the morning and be collected just before the appointment time and then return to school after the appointment.

Lateness and Punctuality

Being punctual is a skill that your child will need for life. It shows respect for others and that school is important.

Children who arrive after the register has closed will be marked as late. It is vital that your child arrives in school on time and prepared for the school day. If your child arrives after this time they must sign in at the office.

Unauthorised absence/ holidays in term time

The school will not authorise holidays or family visits during term time; you should plan these for non-schools days only.

Absence is recorded as unauthorised in the following situations:

- A holiday or period of absence in term time that is not exceptional
- If you withdraw your child/children from school during term time without authorisation being requested in advance.
- School refusal or truancy or frequent late arrival to school
- Frequent or lengthy absence due to illness without supporting medical documentation

A school cannot hold open a child's place at school if a family wants to take an extended absence (more than four weeks). The child would be taken off roll and they would have to re-apply for a place on their return. School places cannot be held open for a child on an extended holiday or for visiting family abroad.

Authorised absence for exceptional circumstances

The Headteacher can only authorise absences for exceptional circumstances; **this will be very rare.**

Examples of this would be:

- Funeral of an immediate relative – up to 2 days to include travel if not local
- Religious observation on days officially set apart by the religious body to which the parents belong – 1 day
- Close family wedding – 1 or 2 days depending on location
- Medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside the school day

Parents/carers need to submit a request to have their child's absence authorised two weeks prior to the event, clearly explaining why the circumstances are exceptional. Permission will not be granted retrospectively.

Family bereavement and exceptional circumstances do occur. In these circumstances the absence will be authorised. It is essential that school is informed of the circumstances as soon as possible so that we can support the child on their return.

Leave for exceptional circumstances will not be considered during SATs week for Y6 pupils.

The decision of the Headteacher to authorise or not authorise an absence is final. There is no appeal process.

If a pupil does not return to school within ten days of the agreed return date, for grant of leave in exceptional circumstances in term time, then the school will consider removing the child from the school roll

and refer the pupil to the Local Authority Children Missing from Education Team. The school has the right to do this under Government legislation.

Monitoring absence

Regular unauthorised absence is monitored by the school and may result in one or more of the following:

- An information letter expressing the school's concern and potentially a conversation with a member of the senior leadership team
- A notice to improve
- A request for a meeting to discuss attendance with the headteacher
- Referral to the Local Authority or (in the case of welfare concerns) a referral to Social Services.

Legal sanctions

If your child has 10 unauthorised sessions (a session is half a day) in a 10-week period the local authority can issue a fixed penalty notice (FPN) to parents/carers. FPNs are issued per parent, per child.

- For the first occasion a child is absent without authority the FPN is £160, and a parent is given the opportunity to pay within 21 days at a rate of £80.
- For the second occasion the same child is absent without authority the FPN is £160.
- For the third occasion the same child is absent without authority a FPN may not be issued and instead the case may be referred directly to a Magistrates Court or alternative interventions may be considered.

If the school refers a period of absence that is 15 consecutive school days or more; Pupil Entitlement: Investigation may consider a FPN is not appropriate. In these instances, the matter may instead be brought directly before the Magistrates Courts.

FPNs remain on a child's record and are monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Officer.

Before making your request to withdraw your child from school you are advised to consider the following information:

1. Absence from learning has been proven to adversely affect children's academic progress.
2. Only in exceptional circumstances will a request for absence from school be authorised and this will only be for a very short period of time.
3. All requests should provide details and reasons why the absence is considered to be exceptional. The Headteacher, in accordance with guidance published by the DfE, will determine if the absence will be authorised.
4. Family holidays do not meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances. Consequently, absence for holidays will not be authorised and will be recorded as unauthorised.
5. If a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence, a Fixed Penalty Notice fine will be issued.
6. The number of days absence incurred will be noted in your child's personal records, and their attendance will be reported every year. Your child's attendance history is part of their school records.

Leave in exceptional circumstances:

If you feel that the circumstances for absence fall into this category, please complete the –

ABSENCE NOTIFICATION Form which can be found on our website under the policy section **or email the office for a copy.**

You must also use this form to inform the school if you are taking your child out of school for a holiday, acknowledging that you know that this will not be approved and a FPN will be issued. An FPN will be issued where a child is missing most of a school week for an absence that is not exceptional. It is essential that we know why your child is absent otherwise your child is deemed as missing and this could be a safeguarding concern.