



WILLOW  
BROOK  
PRIMARY

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Date: September 2020

Next Review: September 2021

## Ethos and Aims

At Willow Brook, we believe that punctuality and good attendance are essential for all pupils, to ensure they can benefit fully from the Proud Traditions, Wide Horizons and High Achievement that Griffin schools offer. We aim to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any barriers to this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible. The school aims at 100% attendance for pupils and promotes good punctuality now and for the future.

Parent and carers should be aware that if they fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually they may be prosecuted under section 444 Education Act 1996 by the Local Authority.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Parents, Guardians and Pupils

Parents/carers of children of compulsory school age are legally required to ensure that they receive full-time education. Parents/carers are also responsible for informing the school of any absence as soon as possible; the school expects to be contacted on each day of the absence. This can be done by telephoning the school, by personal contact or by written note. The reason for absence and when the child is expected to return to school should be stated. Pupils are expected to arrive at school punctually. Persistent lateness can be seen as absence and is managed in the same way as poor attendance by the school. Parents should ensure that their child arrives at school before the morning bell, prepared to begin the school day.

### Governors

Governors regularly assess the effectiveness of attendance procedures and practice. They celebrate with pupils and staff during assemblies and award medals and certificates for 100% attendance.

### School Attendance Lead

The designated senior member of staff responsible for absence is supported by the school's Education Welfare Officer. Attendance is regularly monitored so that pupils at risk of persistent absence can be identified. Investigations are made to understand the nature of the problems, identifying how the school can support parents in meeting their legal responsibility. A range of actions may be taken according to the percentage of absence and reasons provided by parents/carers; these may include completing a CAF or a referral to Children's Services.

### Class Teachers

Registers are computerised and are taken before 9.00 and at 12:30 (Years R, 1 and 2) at 12:45 (Years 3, 4) and at 1:45 (Years 5 and 6). Registers close 30 minutes from the start of the school day. The time of late arrivals is noted and absences recorded, in the class register. Class teachers contribute to procedures by promoting good attendance with their class and highlighting those with poor attendance/punctuality. Class teachers must immediately alert the Designated Lead for Child Protection if they believe or suspect that an absence may be due to a CP issue.

### Attendance Officers (Admin team)

These staff members manage the operational aspects of attendance monitoring, for example; entering reasons for absence onto SIMS, co-ordinating the Late Gate and collating and analysing attendance data. These staff members work in collaboration with the wider staff including Leadership Teams.

## Leave of Absence

The school can approve absence. The school does not have to accept the parent/carers offered explanation as a valid cause for absence. There are certain circumstances outlined in the DfE guidelines that the school categorises as authorised absence. The guidelines are based on the needs of the community and the kinds of reasons parent/carers may wish their children to take leave of absence.

The school follows the guidelines for authorising absence as listed below

- Illness, emergency medical, dental and hospital appointments. It is expected that routine check-ups, including hospital review appointments should, as far as possible, be made during holiday periods or after school hours.
- Family bereavements
- Attending a religious observance
- Off-site activities (These fall into two categories; educational visits or individual activities e.g. an examination)
- Exclusion (Excluded pupils are treated as authorised absence. They will remain on the school's register unless permanently excluded when the situation has to be reviewed)

NB. Willow Brook does not authorise a leave of absence for extended periods during term times e.g. extended holidays or visiting family abroad.

## Holidays during Term Time

We operate the DfE zero tolerance approach to extended holidays and we notify parents/carers of this so that they can make an informed decision about removing children from school for this reason. We refer children with unauthorised extended holiday absence to the local authority who arranges for fixed penalty fines to be issued.

## Lateness

Lesson times start at 8.50. Many classes enter the building just before this time to enable the pupils to prepare for the day. Pupils should be on the playground at least 5 minutes before bell time so that they can enter school calmly with their class and organise themselves ready for the first lesson. All lateness is recorded and lateness after the registers close is marked as absence. If a pupil regularly arrives late for school we monitor and offer support to develop strategies to improve their punctuality.

## Breakfast Club

Willow Brook runs an established Breakfast Club. The aim of the club is to promote punctuality and good attendance. Breakfast Club may be a useful option for families where there are barriers to punctual attendance. Breakfast Club is run by trained school staff and is open from 7.30 am.

## Late Collection of Children

Persistent late collections are monitored and the school attempts to support families with this by helping to develop strategies to improve their punctuality in collecting their children. Willow Brook operates a Tea Time Club which may be useful for families who are unable to collect their children on time from school however it is not a drop in facility and pupils must register to attend.

## School Procedure

The school monitors attendance and lateness weekly. Issues relating to pupil attendance are followed up during regular review periods. Actions taken are time related.

## Attendance during Covid-19

The school will be following the attendance guidance published by the DfE in August 2020.

The full guidance can be found at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/907535/School\\_attendance\\_guidance\\_for\\_2020\\_to\\_2021\\_academic\\_year.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907535/School_attendance_guidance_for_2020_to_2021_academic_year.pdf)

### In summary

School attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. In short, pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects:

Schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and, act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly and report to the local authority within five days.

For the school year 2020 to 2021, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. This code is not counted as an unauthorised absence.