



William Harding School

Attendance Policy

Chair of Governors: Mr Shrivastava	Headteacher: Miss Cotchin
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1: Legislation

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states it is a parent's duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives a full-time education suitable to a child's age, ability, aptitude, and to any special educational needs they may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent may be guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) / (1A) of the Education Act 1996.

This document should be referred to in conjunction with the latest release of guidance from the Department for Education. This is currently 'working together to improve school attendance, May 2022'.

2: Expectations of stakeholders

Schools

All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. Attendance is an essential foundation to positive outcomes for all children and should therefore be everyone's responsibility in school.

Schools are expected to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, children and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and 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 children or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen, and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Parents

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. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education by attendance at school or by education otherwise than a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at a school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance by the school.

Parents are expected to:

- Promote the value of good attendance with their child/children.
- Encourage and expect good attendance and punctuality.
- Work in collaboration with the school to notify us of any absence before 8.30am daily.
- Respond to any communication from the school promptly.
- Contact us immediately should any attendance concerns arise.
- Take family holidays during school holidays.
- Participate in any interventions offered by the school to support the good attendance of their child.

Children

Children are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Notify their parents or the school of any attendance concerns they have.
- Participate in any intervention offered to improve attendance and/or punctuality.
- Understand the law around school attendance, and the requirement for them to attend.

We will:

- Promote good attendance and seek to reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

To meet these objectives, the school will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with children, parents, and appropriate external agencies to provide mutual information, guidance, and support.

The school has a computerised attendance package which is used to take twice daily registers and monitor attendance data continuously.

3. Pupil Absence

Parents must inform the school by 8.30am if their child is absent and give the reason for and likely duration of the absence. Parents can notify the school by calling the main school number and selecting the appropriate option.

Morning registers will open and close at the following times:

Class	Arrival time	Registration opens	Late arrival before the register closes	Registration closes
Reception				
Honeysuckle	8:30-8:40	8:40	8:40-9:10	9:10
Buttercup	8:30-8:40	8:40	8:40-9:10	9:10
Bluebell	8:40-8:50	8:50	8:50-9:20	9:20
Daffodil	8:40-8:50	8:50	8:50-9:20	9:20
Year 1				
Rose	8:30-8:40	8:40	8:40-9:10	9:10
Harebell	8:30-8:40	8:40	8:40-9:10	9:10
Foxglove	8:30-8:40	8:40	8:40-9:10	9:10
Snowdrop	8:30-8:40	8:40	8:40-9:10	9:10
Class	Arrival time	Registration opens	Late arrival before the register closes	Registration closes
Year 2				

Elder	8:40-8:50	8:50	8:50-9:20	9:20
Juniper	8:40-8:50	8:50	8:50-9:20	9:20
Cherry	8:40-8:50	8:50	8:50-9:20	9:20
Lime	8:40-8:50	8:50	8:50-9:20	9:20
Year 3				
Willow	8:45-8:50	8:50	8:50-9:20	9:20
Beech	8:45-8:50	8:50	8:50-9:20	9:20
Hawthorn	8:40-8:45	8:45	8:45-9:15	9:15
Rowan	8:40-8:45	8:45	8:45-9:15	9:15
Year 4				
Blenheim	8:35-8:40	8:40	8:40-9:10	9:10
Waddesdon	8:35-8:40	8:40	8:40-9:10	9:10
Osborne	8:30-8:35	8:35	8:35-9:05	9:05
Ascott	8:30-8:35	8:35	8:35-9:05	9:05
Year 5				
Chatsworth	8:50-9:00	9:00	9:00-9:30	9:30
Hughenden	8:50-9:00	9:00	9:00-9:30	9:30
Cliveden	8:50-9:00	9:00	9:00-9:30	9:30
Manderston	8:50-9:00	9:00	9:00-9:30	9:30
Year 6				
Dudley	8:40-8:50	8:50	8:50-9:20	9:20
Windsor	8:40-8:50	8:50	8:50-9:20	9:20
Cardiff	8:40-8:50	8:50	8:50-9:20	9:20
Warwick	8:40-8:50	8:50	8:50-9:20	9:20

- The register is taken by the class teacher at the start of each session.
- Any child arriving after their arrival time must report to main reception – our single point of entry for late arrivals.
- The registers will be checked promptly after completion to identify children who are absent without notification.
- Before 9.30am, we shall attempt to contact the parents of those children not in school and for whom no reasons for absence have been given.
- We will contact all contacts on our system should absence be without note. This is to establish the reason for absence.
- We will continue to ensure that absence is followed up where no response from home can be sought.

Home visits may be used as a mechanism of support where absence remains unexplained.

Attendance codes are applied using guidance from the DfE publication: working together to improve school attendance.

4: Children missing in education

Where an unexplained absence remains unexplained after day 1, we will formally risk assess the absence and take steps to contact parents via alternative means. This includes contact to all numbers from school, via a withheld number, a letter and email and a home visit.

Where we are unable to reach the parents and/or have sight of the child, we will refer to the local authority's children missing in education team who will then investigate further.

Whilst the local authority requests this information on day 10 of absence, we seek to send this by day 5. We continue rigorous first day response following a referral until the child is located and/or the local authority confirm removal from roll.

The school follows the local authorities processes for ensuring that children who are at risk of missing in education are given the appropriate, prompt support to identify their whereabouts and safeguard their welfare.

We also maintain a list of children 'at risk of CME' where additional specific provision is put in place in the case of absence.

5: Categorising absence

It is at the Headteachers discretion if an absence is to be authorised. The designated senior leader for attendance oversees the authorisation of absences on the Headteachers behalf.

Absences that are not authorised typically include any absences not relating to a child's ill-health or what may be defined as avoidable absence.

An example of these are as follows:

- Looking after siblings or visiting relatives
- Awaiting delivery drivers or helping an adult
- Illness that is not genuine
- Funerals for anybody other than an immediate family member
- Holidays or leave during term time

A request form or notification of absence does not automatically give authorisation of an absence.

An example of authorised absences includes:

- Absence due to sickness or other unavoidable cause
- An absence for religious observance sanctioned by the religious body to which the parents belong
- Medical or dental appointments agreed prior to the absence (parents should seek to return their child within 30 minutes of the appointment)
- Agreed leave of absence under exceptional circumstances

Only the school can authorise absence, not the parents, and the school is not obliged to accept the explanation offered as a valid reason.

We reserve the right to not authorise absences where a child's attendance is below 90% unless medical evidence is provided by the parents.

The best interests of the child will be the deciding factor in authorising or not authorising an absence request.

6: Leave during term time for extended periods or holidays

We expect all children to attend school regularly and, as such, will not authorise any extended leave or holidays during term time unless in exceptional circumstances.

We also expect parents to share the same commitment to learning by planning holidays and leave during the school

holidays. If, in an extreme case, parents wish to request leave for exceptional circumstances, they must write to the Headteacher giving at least ten school days of notice. The Headteacher will consider each application and a nominated officer within the school will respond to parents with the outcome of the application.

We are obliged to follow the local authorities' policy with the escalation of unauthorised absence. As a parent, you are entitled to make representation to the Headteacher using our 'exceptional circumstances form' detailing the exceptional circumstances in which your request is based upon. If the reasons for absence detailed in the request are not deemed to be exceptional, the school may refer the absence to the local authority and an initial Penalty Notice of £120 per parent/adult for each child, reducing to £60 for early payment, may be issued by them.

This would require payment being made directly to the Local Authority within 21 days. Please note that the school does not benefit financially from this action.

Non-payment may mean that the Penalty notice will rise to £120 after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt. If the penalty has not been paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority may choose to instigate legal proceedings under section 444 (1) of the education act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, parents may receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £1000.

7: Lateness:

A child is late if they arrive at school after their arrival time slot (see table above)

Children who arrive after the start of the school day but before registers have closed will be marked as L on the official register. Children who arrive after registers have closed will be marked as U.

Persistent lateness will be followed up using our punctuality escalation system. Parents are notified of our concern promptly and are offered support on an individual basis.

We may take advice and/or refer a case of persistent lateness to the local authority.

8: Medical appointments:

Where possible, routine medical appointments should be booked for outside of the school day. In certain circumstances, where this is not possible, parents / carers should notify the school in writing or by showing the appointment letter or by telephone message of the time and date of the child's medical appointment. Children must attend school before and after the medical appointment as far as is practically possible.

We ask where possible that children miss no more than two hours of school for appointments.

9: Identification & Monitoring:

- Parents/carers of children not in school are contacted on each day of unexplained absence.
- All verbal messages from parents are recorded centrally in the official register.
- Parents/carers will be notified in writing if an absence remains unexplained.
- Home visits may be used to ensure the safeguarding of children not in school.

Leadership monitoring:

- The Headteacher checks registration procedures to ensure consistency by all staff.
- Attendance data for the whole school is presented to the Governing Body regularly. [SEP]
- Governors are given an overview of strategies used and future action to be implemented for raising attendance and support the school in setting targets for the academic year.

10: Managing persistent absence and severe absence

Our school target is 97% and we expect children to aspire for 100% attendance.

All children whose attendance falls below a nominated threshold for that individual term will be monitored weekly and will be treated as a child ‘at risk of persistent absence’. Persistent absence is the official term for more than 10% of absence during the school year. This could be referred to as PA.

We also track, monitor, and provide intervention for children who are severely absent. This is the official term for children whose attendance is below 50%. This could be referred to as SA.

We may be obliged to refer cases to the local authority when the absence threshold is met for further investigation. This could result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.

Additional specific provision will be offered to all children and their families, including early help, as part of our support process.

Our process for managing absence is as follows:

Stage	Threshold	Intervention
1	Any session of absence Category: Expect Voluntary intervention	Universal Support This is the support all children receive to inform them of attendance expectations and to support their regular attendance. For example: class teacher discussions, wraparound care offer, home visits, first day response, morning welcomes, attendance discussions.
2	7 sessions Category: Listen and Understand Voluntary Intervention	A phone call home will be made to notify you of our attendance concern. This will allow you to have a conversation with a member of staff about your child’s attendance. We are more than happy to discuss any concerns you have no matter how small.
3	12 sessions Category: Facilitate Support Voluntary Intervention	A letter home is sent to notify you of our continued concerns. This letter will contain information relating to absences and will signpost support to increase attendance. You will be given the contact details of our FLO team who are on hand to support with attendance.

4	18 sessions Category: Formalise Support Statutory Intervention	All adults with parental responsibility will be invited into school for a formal parenting contract meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to formally identify any barriers leading to the poor attendance of a child. Targets will be set during this meeting which will be reviewed in 4-6 weeks.
5	When required Category: Formalise Support Statutory Intervention	All adults with parental responsibility will be invited into school for a formal parenting contract review. The outcome of this review could be as follows: i) Attendance has improved therefore the case is closed. ii) Attendance hasn't improved – continue the contract iii) Attendance hasn't improved – referral to LA.
6	When required Category: Enforce Statutory Intervention	A referral will be made to the local authority for statutory support in the event of continued low attendance. If our support system does not lead to an increase in attendance, we will seek further support from the local authority. The local authority will seek to identify formally the barriers to attendance and the support provided by the school. It is important to be aware that they may take further action if they feel absences were not for a statutory reason. Our school does not benefit financially from fixed penalty notices.

Parents are made aware that the Headteacher or a nominated officer acting on their behalf may escalate the process and/or make a referral to the Local Authority during any point of the escalation process if they feel attendance is deteriorating at a pace which may harm the continuity of learning.

We maintain a register of all children in the severely absent category. Additional specific provision is provided to all individuals on a bespoke basis to support them to return to a full-time education. This will include signposting to wider support services to remove barriers to attendance.

Where long-term sickness absence takes place, we will work with parents/carers to source education otherwise where possible to support the child's continuity of learning.

11. Rewards

The school invests heavily in rewards and incentives to encourage high attendance. This includes wow attendance days, activities, raffles, and celebration assemblies. A detailed list of our rewards schedule is available upon request.

12: Exclusions

If a child is excluded from school, they will be coded as E – excluded. This is an authorised absence.

If a child is identified within a public place during a period of exclusion, the parent/carer may be issued with a fixed penalty notice by the local authority.

13. Removal from school roll

Where an elective home education request is received, or where a child is absent from our school for 20 days or more, we will work with the local authority to identify further details. As a result, a decision may be made by the local authority to remove a child from our school roll. It would be the parent/carers responsibility to contact the authority's admissions team to seek readmission should the need arise.

14. Part-time timetables

As a rule, the school does not use part-time timetables. Where this does take place, timetables are constructed in partnership with parents and other key stakeholders following a robust assessment of risk. The local authority's procedures for managing part time timetables are followed each time.

15. Attendance within the EYFS

The school actively seeks to promote good attendance from the point of admission and before children reach statutory school age so that children can form good habits for future learning.

Staff ensure that parents and children are aware of the importance of attending school each day through assemblies, newsletters and by direct work with the children.

Daily absence is tracked by the EYFS team and, in the case of no reason for absence, action is escalated in line with section 10 of this policy.

The school records, tracks and analyses the attendance data of all children within the EYFS provision and supports good attendance through an escalation system when attendance drops below threshold.

This escalation system is as follows:

- **Stage one:** Keyworker to identify that attendance is causing concern to the learning journey of the child. A phone call home is made to identify the reasons for absence, to express the importance of attendance and to issue a target of 100% attendance in a timed period.
- **Stage two:** A standard letter is sent home to make the parents aware of the increased concern in relation to their child's attendance. Information is given relating to next steps.
- **Stage three:** An attendance surgery is held in school to address the concerns relating to the attendance of the child. This may convert to a parenting contract should the child reach statutory school age during the process.

16. The role of the FLO (Family Liaison Officer)

The school employs designated staff to support attendance monitoring, recording, and reporting. Family Liaison Officers are responsible for maintaining the school's attendance operations in the following areas:

- Monitoring overall absence levels

- Monitoring individual caseloads of children with poor attendance
- Running initiatives to secure improvements in overall attendance
- Ensuring that individual children are supported following periods of extended absence
- Investigating lateness, absence, and truancy
- Working in partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council to provide evidence to support the work of the Local Authority to take legal action against parents whose children do not attend school regularly or on time.

17. Referrals for additional support

The school works closely with local safeguarding partners and may complete referrals for additional support to the Local Authority's specialist teams in the following circumstances:

- The school has concerns in relation to safeguarding
- The absence threshold in each period has been reached
- The school requires additional support in securing the regular attendance of a child
- The escalation process has failed, and targets haven't been met
- The child is missing in education with no contact for up to 10 school days
- The school is in receipt of a request for elective home education
- Any other concerns which the Headteacher deems a referral necessary to support the child

18. Contact details

The designated senior leader responsible for our strategic approach to attendance is:

Name & Role	Contact Details
Donna Skinner	01296 421733

Further information, advice and guidance can be sought via the following people:

Name & Role	Contact Details
Amy Bone – Lead Family Liaison Officer	01296 421733 / attendance@williamharding.school
Sarah Bicknell – Family Liaison Officer	01296 421733 / attendance@williamharding.school
Domonique Bazeley – Family Liaison Officer	01296 421733 / attendance@williamharding.school
Jo White – Family Liaison Officer	01296 421733 / attendance@williamharding.school
Amanda Lambourne – Family Liaison Officer	01296 421733 / attendance@williamharding.school