



WILLIAM HARDING SCHOOL
Aim high... Work hard... Be kind...

WILLIAM HARDING SCHOOL

Hazlehurst Drive, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP21 9TJ

Phone: 01296 421733

E-mail: office@williamharding.school

Website: www.williamhardingschool.co.uk

Head Teacher: Miss T Cotchin BA(Hons) PGCE NPQH



7th December 2021

Dear parents/carers

Re: Attendance Information

As we continue to work hard to ensure your son/daughter receives the best possible education, we thought it would be useful to share the latest information we have.

Our attendance expectations remain unchanged, and we continue to maintain that all children should attend as frequently as possible. However, we do recognise that children may be absent for longer than usual in the event of a confirmed case of Covid-19.

We have received lots of similar questions from parents and therefore would like to share the answers with all.

My child has symptoms of C-19, what should I do?

Please take your child for a PCR test at the local walk-in or drive-in centre.

We advise against postal PCR tests where possible due to the extended time children will be absent from school whilst awaiting a result.

Who decides what 'code' is assigned to my child's absence?

The Department for Education provides schools with attendance codes to use each year. These codes are pre-set and are not able to be changed by the school. Each code contains a strict criterion which must be met before that code can be assigned to an absence.

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Absences that meet the criteria for an 'authorised absence' code will be coded accordingly and this also indicates the school's agreement of the reasons why a child cannot attend on that day.

Absences which are not agreed by the school are likely to fit the criteria for an 'unauthorised absence' and will be coded accordingly.

Both authorised absences and unauthorised absences count as an absence and will reduce a child's attendance percentage.

If the school is closed, will my child be marked absent?

No. The school is given a special code to use if the school must close which doesn't indicate an absence. This means that your child's attendance will be unaffected should they be unable to attend school due to its temporary closure.

Will a confirmed case of Covid-19 affect my child's attendance?

Yes, but this will be an authorised absence.

We understand that a child must be absent when they are infected with Covid-19 and, therefore, when we conduct our monitoring of attendance, we take each individual case into account. The sessions lost to a confirmed case of C-19 are reviewed and deducted for each child.

We will not seek to challenge any absences due to a confirmed case.

My child is showing signs of not wanting to come to school on certain days, what should I do?

We recognise that in the last 18 months, children have been required to be absent from school more than ever before. In some cases, this has affected engagement with school.

We ask that you monitor and let us know of any unusual signs or patterns that indicate your son/daughter may not want to attend school. Capturing any concerns early helps resolve any issues they are having efficiently and prevents any potential absence from worsening.

Please contact our FLO team if you have any concerns in relation to your son/daughter's attendance. We will work together, in partnership, to resolve any concerns and help your son/daughter to overcome any barriers to learning.

It is also equally as important to show your child, through your own commitment, the value you place on education and the impact of missing school.

My child has had lots of absences this year, should I be worried?

We recognise that children become ill from time to time and recognise the increase in absences seen nationally due to C-19 and the associated testing programme.

However, it is vitally important that children attend school as frequently as possible. When a child returns to school, we put support in place to ensure they're caught up with any missed work and offer support at social time as sometimes extended absence can cause issues with friendship groups.

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My child requires a medical appointment, what should I do?

We understand that children will require regular dental appointments and will need to attend medical appointments when unwell. Where possible these appointments should be made outside of school hours or during the school holiday.

We understand that this is not always possible and your son/daughter may need to attend an urgent medical appointment during school time. Your son/daughter should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

We require evidence of appointments to authorise them as a medical appointment; this can be a photocopy of the appointment letter / card, a screenshot of a text message or an appointment slip. All doctors and dental surgeries are aware that parents may ask for evidence for school records. If no evidence is provided, we may not authorise the absence.

Both authorised and unauthorised medical absences count as an absence and will reduce a child's attendance percentage.

My child is absent from school and a member of the FLO team completed a home visit?

As a school we have a duty of care for all children on roll. If we have not had a reason of absence provided, a member of the FLO team will conduct a home visit to identify the reason your son/daughter is not in school.

If your son/daughter has been absent for more than 4 days a home visit will be completed to ensure everyone is okay and to see if any support can be offered. These home visits are to ensure we as a school are following our policies and procedures to Safeguard children.

We hope that you share this same commitment with us in ensuring their attendance each day.

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the FLO team if you have any further concerns in relation to your son/daughter's attendance at William Harding. We thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Bone

Lead Family Liaison Officer

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