***St Wilfrids Primary school***

Attendance Policy September 2024

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**Section 1: Introduction and Vision**

At St Wilfrid’s School, we believe that regular school attendance is key to enable students to achieve their full potential enabling them to be ready for the next steps of their education. Our students will become confident, independent and competent learners, who are able to make a positive contribution to their education and maximise their aspirations and overall learning.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education’s (DfE’s) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance

Improving attendance is everyone’s business. Attendance is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life choices, whilst being able to establish positive peer relationships.

There is a definite link between attendance and attainment and those students who attend more achieve greater qualifications and are more able to access higher education, employment or further training.

Parents must advise school by telephone before 8.50am on the first day of absence, with reason and provide the school with an expected date of return.

Parents are advised to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day and where possible parents are asked to show appointment card/letter to school.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming and caring environment whereby each member of the school community feels safe and secure- Both staff and student wellbeing is at the heart of what we do.

All staff will work with students and their families to ensure that each student attends school regularly and punctually and we will work with families to identify the reasons for persistent absentees to try to resolve any difficulties where possible.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and punctuality and will support all students and their parents to address issues impacting on attendance and punctuality in an inclusive and personalised manner, ensuring a bespoke package of support is offered, if necessary.

To meet these objectives, St Wilfrid’s Primary School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice, support and guidance.

The Governing Body, Head teacher and staff will ensure that all aspects of this policy and its application promote equality for all students, whilst liaising with your child’s progress leader and/or Senior Leader for Safeguarding alongside the attendance team for any welfare concerns.

St Wilfrid’s Primary School recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, Safeguarding, Bullying and Behaviour.

**Section 2: Aims**

* To demonstrate a strong attendance ethos that improves overall attendance of students and reduces the numbers of persistently absent students.
* To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities of the whole school community and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
* To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, staff and governors.
* To highlight a systematic and clear approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data to improve school and student performance.
* To provide advice, support and guidance to parents and students and build a positive and professional rapport with all parents and carers.
* To promote the general importance of legal requirements of good attendance to students, parents and carers, whilst developing positive and consistent communication between home and school.
* To implement a system of rewards and sanctions to celebrate good and improved attendance.
* To promote effective partnerships with the Local Education Authority and other external support agencies.
* To recognise the needs of individual students when planning reintegration following a significant period of absence and install clear support systems for vulnerable students.

**Section 3: Legal Framework**

Manchester City Council, upon a request from school, can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice

 Before requesting a legal sanction, the school will consider the individual case, including:

* Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
* Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
* Whether appropriate support has been put in place
* Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate
	+ Each parent who is liable for the pupil’s offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence

 If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days

 If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days

 A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

#  Notice to Improve

 If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, a Notice to Improve letter will be issued in line with processes set out in by Manchester City Council’s Code of Conduct. This will include a clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn’t improve within the monitoring period which will be up to 6 weeks. Sufficient improvement will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

It is parents/carers responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. If you allow your child to be absent, school will not authorise the absence, without medical evidence and you may be committing an offence and you could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or be Prosecuted.

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 and Department for Education, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the student was:

* present;
* absent;
* present at approved educational activity
* unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

**Section 4: Attendance Protocols**

**Everyday:**

* Students are expected to arrive for registration by 8.50am; any student arriving after this will be given a late mark (L).
* Registers will close at 9.30am. Any student arriving late to school after 9.30am will be given an unauthorised late after registration closed mark (U). This will impact on their overall attendance as it is recorded as an absence from school for the morning session.
* Absences for persistent minor ailments will not be authorised unless medical evidence is provided.

**When a student is absent:**

* Parents are asked to notify school before 8.50am if their child is to be absent, giving the reason and the expected return date. Where a reason has not been provided, a member of the attendance team will contact the parent and or other emergency contacts, to ascertain a reason for absence.
* If the school are not given a reason for absence or the reason given is not deemed to be acceptable then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
* Any absence for persistent minor ailments will require medical evidence to enable school to authorise the absence.
* Holidays in term time will not authorised and may result in a penalty notice or legal intervention.

**Every week:**

* Contact will be made with the parents of students who have absences that are unaccounted for. If telephone contact cannot be made then a letter will be sent by post.
* If no contact has been made by a parent, a home visit will be made by day 3. If there are Safeguarding concerns a visit will be made on day one of absence.

**Ongoing:**

* Intervention plans specific to individual students and their parents/carers will be ongoing whilst attendance issues remain.

**Section 5: Categorising Absence (codes)**

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the headteacher of the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers.

If a student is to be absent from school, a parent/carer should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence, before 08:50am and provide the school with an expected date of return.

**Absence will be categorised as follows:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| **Attending at a place other than at school** |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| V | Attending an educational visit or trip | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school |
| P | Participating in a sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| W | Attending work experience | Pupil is on an approved work experience placement |
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity | Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience |
| D | Dual registration | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| **Absent – approved leave of absence** |
| C1 | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| J1 | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| S | Study leave | Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination |
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| C2 | Part-time timetable | Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable |
| C | Exceptional circumstances  | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **Absent – other authorised reasons** |
| T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health) |
| E | Suspended or excluded | Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made |
| **Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause** |
| Q | Lack of access arrangements | Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school |
| Y1 | Transport not available | Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available |
| Y2 | Widespread disruption to travel | Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency |
| Y3 | Part of school premises closed | Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open |
| Y4 | Whole school site unexpectedly | Every pupil absent as the school is closed closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather) |
| Y5 | Criminal justice detention | Pupil is unable to attend as they are:- In police detention- Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or- Detained under a sentence of detention |
| Y6 | Public health guidance or law | Pupil’s travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law |
| Y7 | Any other unavoidable cause | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes |
| **Absent – unauthorised absence** |
| G | Holiday not granted by the school | Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school |
| N | Reason for absence not yet established | Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes (must be cleared at least weekly) |
| O | Absent in other or unknown circumstances | No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn’t satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence |
| U | Arrived in school after registration closed | Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session |
| **Administrative codes** |
| Z | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered |
| # | Planned whole-school closure | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays |

**Section 6: Deletions from the register**

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

* The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order.
* The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority.
* The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
* Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed.
* Death of a student.
* Transfer between schools.
* Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
* Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority has tried to locate the student.
* A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age.
* In custody for more than 4 months (in discussion with the Youth Offending Team).
* 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student.
* Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student.

St Wilfrid’s Primary School will follow Manchester City Council’s Children Missing in Education Protocol (Children Absent from Education) when a student’s welfare and whereabouts are unknown.

**Section 7: Roles and Responsibilities**

St Wilfrid’s Primary School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as the shared responsibility of all staff, governors, parents/carers, students and the wider school community.

**The Governing Body will:**

* Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents.
* Regularly review the school‘s Attendance Policy and ensure that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
* Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters and chair attendance panel meetings.
* Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
* Agree school attendance targets and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school.
* Monitor the school’s attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings.
* Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
* Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off site.
* Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
* Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

**The Senior Leadership Team will:**

* Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
* Link with staff and Senior Leader for Safeguarding on any welfare concerns
* Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents, whilst developing positive relationships with students and parents.
* Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve.
* Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
* Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
* Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
* Return school attendance data to the relevant authorities as required and on time.
* Report the school’s attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the governing body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance.
* Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off site are implemented.
* Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
* Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
* Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families.

**The Attendance Administrative support will:**

* Ensure that all registers are uploaded to SIMs.
* Input absence data using appropriate codes.
* Make contact with parents when a student is absent with no reason provided.
* Send and receive messages via school system.
* Maintain a system of identifying students arriving late to school.
* Proceed with legal intervention as instructed.
* Raise attendance issues to Attendance officer, advise of home visits needed

**Designated Attendance Officer/ Associate Attendance Adviser (One Ed) will:**

* Safeguard students with persistent absence by ensuring their wellbeing through home visits and working together with other agencies.
* Case manage and proceed with legal interventions where appropriate. (Particularly where school interventions have been unsuccessful due to lack of engagement or consistency from parents).
* Send letters to parents with regard to absence from school.
* Work together with parents to develop action plans with regard to the school attendance of students.
* Support parents and families to address issues impacting on a student’s attendance at school via a range of interventions.
* Complete EHA assessments and use a multi-agency approach to support.
* Liaise with other agencies as necessary.

**We request that Parents will:**

* Talk to their child about school life and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child’s work and educational progress.
* Instill the value of education and regular attendance within the home environment.
* Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
* Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the

expected date of return.

* Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctor, dentist, etc. out of school hours.
* Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
* Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child’s attendance.
* Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child’s education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
* Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing a school bag and uniform the evening before.
* Not to keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
* Avoid taking their child away during term-time, where leave of absence is required parents are asked to put this request in writing to school.

**Section 8: Support Systems**

St Wilfrid’s Primary School recognises that poor school attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child’s life. This may be related to problems at home or in school, or maybe due to illness. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s attendance and/or behavior in school, for example, bereavement, illness of a family member, incidents of domestic abuse, divorce/separation, or any other issues within the family home. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

School also recognises that some students may require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with specific health needs/ongoing illness, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

* Analysis of data
* Reward systems/ recognizing improved attendance
* PSHE awareness raising sessions
* Letters home
* Student voice activities
* Punctuality reports
* Friendship groups and peer relationships
* Pastoral care and support
* Discussion with parents and students – meetings in school/home visits
* Early Help Assessments (EHA)
* Referrals to support agencies and links with external support agencies
* Attendance contracts
* **Use of Emotional Barriers to School Attendance pathway (EBSA)**
* **Trauma-informed approaches**
* **Time limited part time time-tables**
* **Inclusion Strategy Toolkit**
* **Reintegration support packages**

**Section 9: Stages of Intervention**

**Stage 1:** If a student has had a number of periods of absence during a half term or there is concern about the reason given, contact will be made with parent to discuss. A package of support maybe offered from school and external agencies (where appropriate) will be offered in order to bring about an improvement in a student’s attendance.

**Stage 2:** Following initial contact, if concerns re: attendance persist, the parent will be invited to a meeting in school or a home visit will be arranged by a member of the pastoral team/ Attendance Adviser. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss reasons for absence and to agree an improvement plan. School staff will offer a range of interventions to support students to achieve regular school attendance. Support may be sought from other agencies at this stage and an EHA assessment and or an attendance contract offered. In cases of unauthorised absence, a Penalty Notice application may be submitted to the Local Authority.

**Stage 3:** If the student’s attendance continues to deteriorate and becomes severe absence a further meeting with the parent will be arranged to complete an attendance contract, where a set of targets and action points will be agreed. The student will have their attendance monitored over an agreed period, during which time the school will work with the parent/carer to implement the plan.

 Parents may be issued with a Notice to Improve letter in line with processes set out in Manchester City Council’s Code of Conduct. This will include a clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn’t improve within the monitoring period which will be up to 6 weeks. Sufficient improvement will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

If a parent fails to engage at any of the stages, then stage 3 may be reached at an earlier point in time.

# Appendix 1: Traveller Family Absence

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1996, section 444(6), states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in the year preceding the absence. This applies only when the family proves it is engaged in a trade or business that requires it to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

When in or around Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

St Wilfrid’s Primary schoolwill be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil’s school place at xxx will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

St Wilfrid’s Primary schoolcan only effectively operate as the child’s base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and

inform the school regarding proposed return dates

St Wilfrid’s Primary schoolwill authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling for work or trade purposes and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

The child is on roll and attending another visited school

Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority’s Traveller Education Service

The child is undertaking computer-based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil and appropriate statutory action may be undertaken.