

St Wilfrid's C.E. Primary School

Information for our Parents & Carers issued 22nd November 2021

Attendance and Lateness

Why is attendance important?

"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

St Wilfrid's C.E. Primary School is currently striving to improve our level of attendance. Over **the last half term attendance has improved** and we want this to continue. Although attendance has improved there is still a way to go and we must meet our target of 96.5%.

Educational research undertaken on attendance, clearly states that good school attendance has a positive impact on the academic achievement of pupils. An excellent record of attendance is therefore essential for children to make the best progress in their academic, social and emotional development.

Staff find that longer term absence from school is disruptive for the children, and that it can be difficult for them to catch up on any missed learning. DFE and Government guidance reviewed since the Covid pandemic has also meant that all schools are under increased pressure to improve its attendance record. This is also something that Ofsted look at when making a judgement about a school.

Previous regulations regarding approved absences (particularly those caused by family holidays) no longer apply. Absences will only be authorised if they are caused by genuine illness or by 'exceptional circumstances'. In the case of illness, school may ask parents/ carers to produce a doctor's note especially in case of extended or regular absence.

Good attendance – what are the benefits and consequences of missing a few days over the school year?

Attendance	Missing days from school	
100%	Zero days off	Excellent! A child can take advantage of all learning opportunities.
98%+	1 – 4 days	Very Good – this will help all aspects of their progress and life in school.
97%-98%	5 days – a school week	Satisfactory Attendance. A child should reach his/her full potential, leading to the best possible start to their formal education
96.5%	National average	Nationally this was the average school attendance
93-96.9%	8-14 days or more	Below National average attendance nationally. If a child has more than 8 days away from school they may fail to make the expected progress.
Below 93%	15 days (three school weeks)	Unacceptable – A child will now be finding it extremely difficult to keep up and achieve their best.
Below 90% - Government guidelines for persistent absenteeism	20 days (four weeks)	Unacceptable Persistent absenteeism – A child will now be finding it extremely difficult to keep up and achieve their best. Below 90% attendance is considered persistent absenteeism and the Local Authority may become involved & take action.
Below 82%	30 days (five school weeks)	Children with this attendance are missing a week every half term. Absence is causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It is seriously affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child's learning. The school will be supported by the Local Authority to take action against parents/carers.

Duties and responsibilities of parents / carers

To understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality to the educational, social and emotional welfare of your child.

To have your child at school ready for teaching by the start of the day. Doors are open at 8:45am

To inform school of any absence as early as possible on the day of absence

To ensure that contact details on school records are kept up to date – including new mobile numbers

To accept support and guidance from the school/external services should there be absence and/or lateness problems.

To make medical and dental appointments during school holidays or before/after the school day where reasonably practical.

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full time basis.

Procedures and Monitoring attendance

Holidays

One of the major contentious issues, both as a school and nationally, is holidays in term time. Holidays during term time can unfortunately not be authorised.

First day response system

We operate a first day response system which requires parents/ carers to ring school on the first day to report a child's absence. This is a parents/ carers responsibility and should be done as early as possible. If the school office is closed you can still ring school and leave a message on the answer machine, so please do this as soon as you know your child will be absent from school. Our admin team will then check the messages at the start of the school day. The school office is open from 8:15am and we would appreciate a call to school no later than 8.40am so staff can be informed of the absence and the class can begin learning as promptly as possible. If parents or carers fail to carry out their parental responsibility to make this call we will regard this as a safeguarding issue.

If by **9.30am** we haven't heard from parents/carers, school will make a phone call to ascertain the reason for the absence. The conversation by the admin staff will initially clarify if your child is safe at home and then ascertain the reason why you haven't notified the school. You will then be asked:

- the reason for your child's absence
- the intended number of days of absence in light of your child's condition
- to telephone school on the 3rd and 5th day of absence (if appropriate) to update school on your child's condition and when they may be well enough to return to school.

Lateness & Unauthorised absences

Punctuality is an important life skill

10 minutes late a day = nearly 1 hour of lessons missed each week = 2 weeks of school per year!! This is equivalent to 95% attendance. This is below National Average attendance!

School opens its doors at **8.45am** and they are closed promptly at **8.55am**. **Learning starts at 8:55am** once the register has been taken and dinner numbers recorded. Any child arriving at school **after 8.55am** will be recorded on the register as **late (L)**. Classroom doors are locked at 9am. Children who arrive after that time must enter school through the main entrance, where they will be entered into the late book.

If your child arrives in school **after 9.30am** once the legal register has been returned to the office they will be recorded as **(U) unauthorised absence** as they are not present and essential learning time has been lost.

Late Book

The late book can be found at the main office and includes more information for the reason for lateness. If you are aware your child is going to be late and can't bring them into school then it is your responsibility to inform the school as to the reason for lateness. The number of minutes of learning time lost will be recorded and reviewed on a weekly basis.

Lateness is as equally serious as absence. For children and families who seem to be developing patterns of lateness we will follow the same steps as absences. We will record and review the total number of minutes your child has missed and may take further action should it be necessary.

Procedures for attendance and lateness that is causing a concern

Step 1: Where there are concerns (3 times recorded in the late book) about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact home (especially if attendance falls below 96% (National average))

Step 2: If concerns persist the school will write to the parent or carer (If attendance falls below 93%)

Step 3: If attendance falls below 90% (this is now classed as a persistent absentee) the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/ carer and the head teacher and Governor representative (Safeguarding committee).

Step 4: If attendance does not improve a formal referral to the Local Authority will be made and further action will be taken. Penalty notices will be processed by the local authority and fines will be issued.

Medical appointments

It is essential to avoid appointments during the school day where reasonably practical. I understand sometimes there is a medical emergency where this is unavoidable but these should be minimal.

As a school we need to work hard to ensure our children are getting the maximum learning time from our quality staff.

If you can't avoid a scheduled medical appointment during the school day parents and carers must complete a medical slip at the school office where we will require verification by showing a formal letter/appointment card. The admin staff will then sign the slip and this will be added to the school register system so an appropriate code can be given. If the appointment is within the school day it is recommended that you bring your child into school and collect them from school to attend their appointment. If **no evidence** is shown then this will also result in an **unauthorised code** being given.

Good attendance

St Wilfrid's Primary School will employ a number of strategies to promote regular attendance.

- A reward is given to the class with the best attendance in assembly each week.
- Attendance certificates are given out in our termly assemblies for 100% attendance
- Certificates and awards are given at the end of each academic year.

We will track the attendance termly as good practice and issue our usual attendance letters. We will also assess termly reports against the same term from the previous year to ensure like for like data (obviously Covid restrictions apply).

Thank you so much for working with us on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any queries that you may have.

Yours sincerely

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