Windsor Academy Trust

(Insert Academy Details)

Attendance Policy (Secondary)	
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VERSION CONTROL		
VERSION	**DATE**	**CHANGES**
V X.X *	DATE WRITTEN	SCHEDULED REVIEW NEW POLICY POLICY RE-WRITE REVIEW TO GIVE EFFECT TO CHANGES IN STATUTORY GUIDANCE CHANGES TO NAMED PERSONNEL OTHER – ENSURE SPECIFIED

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1. How have we written this policy?

This attendance policy is primarily for families and parents to help them understand how we approach attendance at [insert school name]. Therefore, we have written this policy with a group of parents to make sure that it is as clear and helpful as it can be.

2. Attendance is important

Attendance at school is deeply important. If students are not in school, they cannot participate in all of the valuable things school can bring. Developing academically is, of course, important, but being a part of a school community and the development of students' personal potential. is an equally important part of student's thriving at school.
Therefore, we will:

- work consistently to make school an irresistible place to be;
- listen to students and their families, building strong relationships;
- look at students' attendance very carefully;
- reward and recognise excellent attendance and improvements in attendance;
- make sure that families have the support they need to promote excellent attendance and punctuality;
- support students and their families to reduce absence from school.

In [insert school name], [insert SLT attendance lead name] has overall responsibility for promoting regular, punctual attendance at school.

3. What is the process for attendance?

Each day, we take a register of those students who are present. We also note those who are absent and note down students who are late and why they were late. We use a range of 'codes' so that we can keep careful records of attendance and reasons for absence.

If we haven't heard from a family whose child is absent, we will give you a call to check in. If we can't get in touch, we will try to leave you a message.

Where we don't have an explanation for an absence and/or a student remains absent, we will call each day and we may make a home visit. We might also ask you to come into school to discuss ways we could help with school attendance. In some cases, we will need to involve other agencies to check if a student is safe, or we may involve an education welfare officer.

We always look carefully at each student's attendance. If we see any patterns of absence emerging, we will contact you to see if we can help. Because attendance at school is so important, it is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their child regularly attends school. Therefore, in exceptional circumstances, we might need to work with other agencies such as the Local Authority to take legal action to ensure regular attendance. This is relatively rare, and we will try to work with students, families and parents before things get to this stage.
We will reward and recognise excellent and improving attendance.

Insert here the ways in which you will recognise and reward good and improving attendance. Make reference to student voice activity completed to capture students' views on how good and improving attendance should be rewarded

4. How can families help?

We are here to support families so that students have good attendance and punctuality. We appreciate families' support in three key areas: getting to school regularly, getting to school on time and letting school know when a student is absent.

Regular attendance

Regular attendance is really important to a student's personal and academic development. Families can help with regular attendance by taking holidays in school holidays, booking medical and other appointments outside of the school day if this is possible, and making sure that if a student is well enough to come to school, they do attend. We encourage students to attend school at least 97% of the time. When a student's attendance drops to 95%, this is the equivalent of being absent for half a day a fortnight. Missing this much school means that a student falls behind in their learning, misses personal development activities and extra-curricular activities.

Being on time

Students need to arrive on the school site by [insert the time that the school requires students on site]. Being on time is important so that the day can start crisply and students are ready for the school day.

The register is open until [insert times register closes]. Students who arrive after [insert session start times] but before the register closes will be recorded as late. If a student arrives after the register closes, they have to be marked as absent for the morning and/or afternoon session.

Letting school know about absence

Of course, there are unforeseen occasions when a student needs to be absent. We ask that families support the school by letting us know the reasons for any absence straight away. [insert arrangements for letting school know].

If families/parents know in advance that a student will be absent, we appreciate families letting us know in advance. [insert arrangements for notifying foreseen absence]. Sometimes, we might ask to see appointment confirmations or medical details. This could be when absences are repeated or longer term, for example.

There are very limited circumstances in which we can authorise holidays during term time. If families are planning to go on holiday during term time, we request that you [insert how families parents are to request leave of absence from the headteacher] before booking. You can ask for a form in the school office. The reasons for a term-time holiday need to be exceptional for the headteacher to authorise them. Each case is treated individually.

Another way that families can help is to make sure that when there is an appointment that has to take place during the school day, students come back into school as soon as possible after the end of the appointment. This means that the minimum amount of school time will be missed.

Talk to us

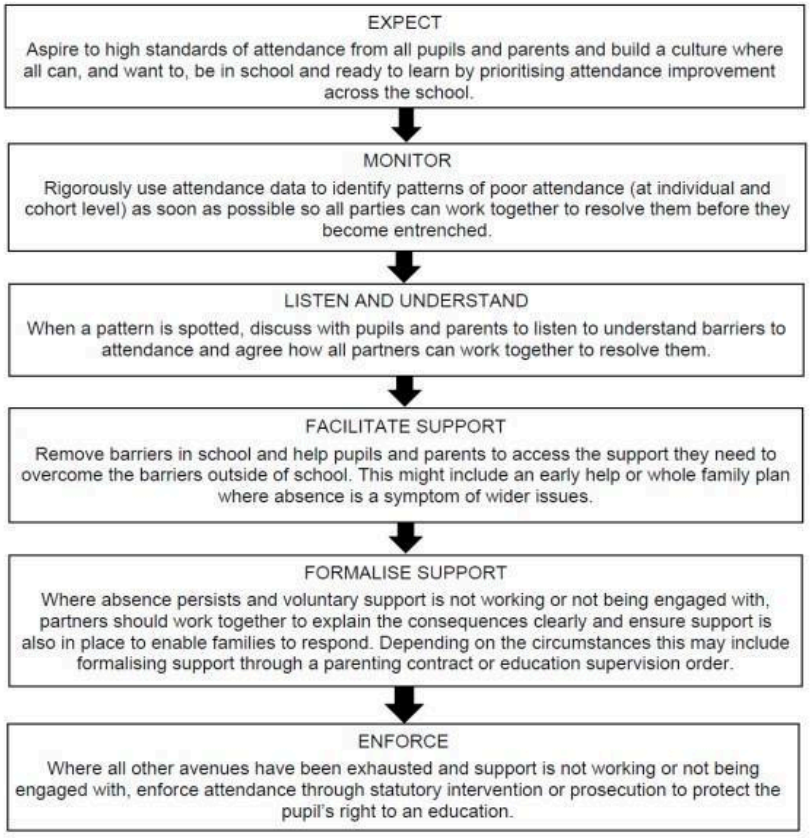
We know that sometimes, school attendance can be difficult for students. We are here to help. If attendance is starting to be problematic, please contact the school office and ask to speak to [insert SLT attendance lead]. We will work with you to try to overcome any barriers.

There are others in school that can help, too. [outline pastoral links and give easy ways to contact them.]

5. Supporting students, families and parents if attendance becomes a problem

We want to work in partnership with students and their families to promote good attendance. Therefore, we will keep a close eye on attendance so that we can help where necessary.

Our approach to supporting families to improve attendance will follow this process:



This is what you can expect from us in response to students' levels of attendance.

97-100% missing around 6 days	The Green Zone	When a student's attendance is in this zone, this is ideal. Student will be benefiting from the full range of what school has to offer.
93-96.9% missing around 14 days	The Yellow Zone Emerging concerns	When a student's attendance is in this zone we will begin to keep an eye on attendance patterns. This way, we can get in touch with you to see if any support is needed.
90-92.9% Missing around 19 days	The Amber Zone Concerns	When a student's attendance is in this zone, we will get in touch with families/parents and families to let them know. We will ask you if there's any help you need because we know that there is a real risk of a student falling significantly behind and missing out.
Below 90% Missing more than 20 days	The Red Zone Significant concerns	When a student's attendance is below 90%, this is classified as 'persistently absent'. This is a real worry. We will ask families and students to have a discussion with us and to make a plan to improve attendance really quickly so that attendance is back on track.

There is a range of attendance support available from school. There is also a range of support available from other organisations which we can signpost and sometimes refer you to.

Extra information

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A. Roles and responsibilities

Attendance is so important that everyone at the Trust and the school has a role to play. This includes:

1. Students
2. Parents and families
3. Adults in schools including
    a. Teachers
    b. Pastoral staff

c. Attendance leaders
d. The senior member of staff responsible for attendance
e. Headteachers

4. Other agencies such as the Local Authority
5. Local Academy Advisory Committees
6. The CEO and Director of Education
7. The Trust's Board of Directors

What can students do to make sure attendance is excellent?

Students can make sure attendance is excellent by being ready for school each day. The extent to which students are independent in being ready will depend on their age and development. It can be helpful for students to:

- make a list of what needs to be done each night before school the next day;
- check the list each night to make sure that, for example, uniform is ready, iPads are charged and homework is completed;
- speak to a trusted adult in school as soon as there is a problem, especially if something makes school uncomfortable or feel unsafe;
- if attendance problems happen, work with adults in school to understand why.

What can parents and families do to make sure attendance is excellent?

Parents and families play a very important role in making sure that attendance is excellent. They can help by:

- promoting regular attendance at home, not taking holidays during school time, booking medical appointments outside of school time whenever this is possible and getting students to school for part of the day when a some school is missed because of an appointment;
- helping students to be on time;
- letting school know about absence as soon as possible;
- talk to school about any issue that comes up so that the right people can help.

What is the role of the class teacher?

The class teacher is the first point of contact for most students and their families. The class teacher will build up a good relationship with all students and families.
Teachers can help to promote good attendance by:

- taking accurate registers;
- noticing patterns of absence and sharing these patterns with families, pastoral leaders and others in school as relevant;
- working with families to understand these patterns;
- working with pastoral staff when attendance is in the amber or red zones to make action plans to improve attendance;
- welcoming students back after an absence;

- working with pastoral staff to help students to catch up after long-term absence.

What is the role of pastoral staff?

(Insert here the expected relationship between pastoral staff and families. This is likely to be unique to the schools organisation and context)

What is the role of attendance leaders?
What is the role of the senior member of staff responsible for attendance?

The senior member of staff for attendance is responsible for the overall strategy for attendance. This includes:

- making sure that everyone plays their role in attendance;
- the data sharing strategy;
- the listening strategy;
- the mental health and well-being strategy;
- the overall family and parent partnership strategy;
- drawing together the half-termly attendance review;
- sharing the review with all staff;
- making sure that communication with parents and families is effective, especially relating to student illness;
- making sure that all students in the 'Amber Zone' have home contact and monitoring;
- making sure that all students in the 'Red Zone' have family and parent meetings and attendance action plans;
- making sure that interventions to improve attendance are put in place;
- making sure that action plans and interventions are reviewed and adapted as necessary;
- making sure that the 'local offer' map is complete and kept up-to-date;
- making sure that attendance coding is accurate and consistent;
- advising the headteacher on findings and legal action where necessary.

What is the role of the headteacher?

The headteacher is pivotal in making attendance a key priority for everyone. Headteachers will:

- make sure that attendance policies are implemented well, and everyone knows their role;
- look at attendance daily and make sure that everyone involved is playing their part well, especially the senior leader for attendance;
- make decisions around authorising term-time holidays only in exceptional circumstances, fines and legal routes to secure good attendance when this is needed.

What is the role of Local Advisory Bodies?

- Local Advisory Bodies will promote the importance of attendance through all of the work they do;
- they will receive a report at each meeting showing how attendance is going and what is being done to improve it.

What is the role of the CEO and Director of Education?

Attendance is a top priority for everyone. Therefore, senior Trust leaders will:

- maintain an ongoing focus on attendance across the family;
- support school leaders to identify and break down barriers to good attendance;
- ensure that the right resource and training are put in place so that adults in school can effectively promote good attendance;
- support with school-level communications;
- share data and insights with the relevant committee and the board of directors.

What is the role of the Trust's Board of Directors?

- receive an overview of attendance from the chair of the performance and standards committee;
- offer support and challenge around attendance, seeing it as a key priority for the family as a whole.

B: Local Support for Attendance

There is a range of services that the school can offer. [Insert here the school-level offer]. If appropriate, we can make a referral to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAHMS) or support you to speak to your doctor about barriers to attendance. In addition, there is a range of local services and orgnaisations who can also help. Schools should insert here the scoping of local services as per the attendance codified approach. This can include family/parent help groups, SEND groups and the like.

C: Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The headteacher will consider each application for term-time absence individually. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least eight weeks before the absence. Families/parents should use the leave of absence request form [insert where families/parents/carers can access the form]. The Headteacher may need evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include

- illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments;
- religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the students family/parents/carers belong.

If necessary, the school will seek advice from the family/parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart;

- traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.

D: Legal sanctions

We would much rather sort out attendance problems by talking with students, families and parents. However, the school, local authority and police can fine parents/carers for unauthorised absences of a child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. We will always use fines in line with the Department for Education's guidance.

Headteachers are likely to issue fines for term-time holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

If issued with a fine or a penalty notice, the first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular student will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same student is charged at a flat rate of £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 issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- the number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year;
- one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission;
- where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

E: Keeping and maintaining attendance registers

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- present;
- attending an approved off-site educational activity;
- absent;
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- the original entry;
- the amended entry;
- the reason for the amendment;
- the date on which the amendment was made;
- the name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- for students of compulsory school age, whether an absence is authorised or not;
- the nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity;
- the nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Students should arrive in school by [time] on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at [time] and will be kept open until [time – not longer than 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place]. The register for the second session will be taken at [time] and will be kept open until [time].

F: Attendance monitoring

The school will:

- monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level;
- look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns;
- identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern;
- identify students who are persistently absent (absent for more than 10% of the time) and those who are severely absent (absent for more than 50% of the time);
- support students, families and parents where there is persistent and severe absence to access the support they need to improve attendance.

Explain any contextual ways your school monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require support with their attendance. For example, how you tailor your approach to your context and the needs of particular cohorts of students.
Explain any other procedures your school has for targeting unauthorised absence. For example - meetings, letters, closer monitoring.

G: Links with other policies, legislation and guidance

This policy links to the following policies:

- child protection and safeguarding policy;
- behaviour policy.

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- part 6 of The Education Act 1996;
- part 3 of The Education Act 2002;
- part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- the Education (pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments);
- the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

It also refers to:

- school census guidance;
- keeping Children Safe in Education;
- mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.

H: How will we monitor the effectiveness of this policy?

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Windsor Academy Trust's Performance and Standards Committee.

I: Attendance codes

Windsor Academy Trust Schools will use the attendance codes in line with the Department for Education Guidance.