



WINCHCOMBE SCHOOL

Attendance and Absence Policy

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Review Committee:
Curriculum & Standards

This Policy was reviewed and adopted by the Full Trustee Board

Adopted		
Signature		Headteacher
Signature		Chair of Curriculum
Date		
Version Updates	i. Full revision against model policy	

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1. Aims

Raise levels of achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance consistently above the school's target of 96%, punctuality and involvement in the School with an aim towards all students being in school 100% of the time whenever possible.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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 \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance admin team

Led by the AHT responsible for attendance the attendance admin team is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Working with education welfare / inclusion officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Team Expectations:

- Make a phone call home on the first day of absence following text and e mail.
- Organise meetings with students and contact home about persistent absence.
- Lead on AIM plan for persistently absent students under 90%.
- Liaise with HoP with concerns over absence – attend HoP meetings
- Oversee the administration of the SIMS register system. Streamline and make adjustments to systems and procedures
- Update register after students have arrived late
- Prepare reports for tutors/ Heads of Phase.
- Prepare referrals for EEI team for lateness after registration closed and unauthorised absence.
- Collate lists for Attendance Assemblies.
- Liaise with Attendance Manager/ SLT link over lists of students who are a concern and meet with concern students and parents when appropriate.
- Refer students who are late more than three times in a half term to their HoP for a letter to be sent home and the relevant sanction implemented.
- Liaise with Heads of Phase and Deputy Headteacher over the make up of the Improving Attendance tutor group for those students who are persistently absent.
- To coordinate letters home and potential sanctions for parents who fail to support the school appropriately over their child's attendance.
- Arrange a welfare check after two days absence if no contact. This may be earlier if there is a safeguarding concern.
- Bring 'cases of concern' to the Early Help forum (fortnightly).
- Where appropriate develop a 'My Plan' to support and improve attendance.
- Work to create individual packages and reintegration plans.
- Liaise with Teens in Crisis counsellor and Designated Safeguarding Lead and make referrals if necessary.

3.4 Class teachers & Form tutors

Class teachers & Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Expectations:

- Be a good role model – arrive on time
- Give attendance/punctuality a high profile. Praise students for arriving on time. Take action with students who are late (referral issue).
- Keep an accurate register for lessons and tutor group registration completed within the first ten minutes of the session.
- Inform attendance officer of any student who is in school but not in your lesson.
- Make a list of students who are taking part in extra-curricular activities – copy to be sent to the office.
- Inform HoP when absence is impacting upon achievement

3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

3.6 Heads of Phase

Heads of Phase should play an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality. They act as a contact points for parents/students.

Expectations:

- Give attendance/punctuality a high profile.
- Implement system of rewards and sanctions.
- Support/monitor the work of tutors. Agree plans of action. Lead and share good practice. Form attendance tutor groups if necessary.
- Discuss with Attendance Team all unauthorised absences. Relay actions to tutors.
- Contact parents to discuss attendance issues/ patterns as required.
- Attend meetings with Attendance Team. Identify issues and causes. Agree action. Monitor progress.
- Provide work for excluded students and long term absentees.
- Work to create and/or monitor individual packages and reintegration plans.
- Liaise with school nurse service and make referrals if required.
- Focus on attendance of all students but especially student groupings such as Pupil Premium and SEND.
- Liaise with Deputy Headteacher in deciding on the students required for the Improving Attendance tutor group (Y11)
- Where appropriate develop a 'My Plan' to support and improve attendance.
- Liaise with Designated Safeguarding Lead, School Nurse and any other linked professionals and make referrals if necessary.

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 8.50am each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.40pm and will be kept open until 1.20pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.50am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents can report absence via telephone (school switchboard number), email (to absence@winchcombeschool.oc.uk) or via the MIS Gateway App.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents can notify planned absence via telephone (school switchboard number) or email (to absence@winchcombeschool.co.uk).

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Lateness Concerns are identified through:

- Monitoring of the sign-in app weekly to identify >3 lateness within a given term lists communicated to Heads of Phase for follow-up

- Further lateness triggers a parent letter to remind parents of expectations
- Sanctions issued where appropriate in line with Behaviour Policy
- Parental and Student meetings for persistent lateness
- AIM plans used to support improved punctuality

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by 11am of the first day (and subsequent unreported days)
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Students' on-going attendance, absence and punctuality is available via the school MIS Gateway App.

Parents receive an annual report with their attendance record for the academic year included.

5. Authorised And Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' e.g. serious family illness or bereavement. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

It is very unlikely that requests for holidays or extended leave will be authorised but if parents want the school to consider such a request, they must complete an application for holiday / extended leave form which is available on the school website at least one month before the relevant start date. Family work patterns or the financial implications of going on holiday in term time would not meet the criteria of exceptional circumstances. Parents will then receive a response informing them of the school's decision.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' 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

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Persistent absence is attendance that falls below 85%. An absence report is monitored weekly.

- Absence supported by medical evidence is checked
- Students whose absence is declining:
 - Head of Phase is notified for a follow-up to identify reasons, patterns etc. An informal plan is agreed to improve attendance.

OR

 - Parental intervention through letters, phone-call or meeting.

OR

 - AIM plan is written. Referrals to external support may be used to improve attendance.

A risk-assessed home to school transport service may be considered with parental and student agreement. This can only be sanctioned by the Headteacher or DSL.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

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.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- Attendance and Praise assemblies
- Parent communication around illness and absence
- Yearly attendance prize draw based on weekly attendance
- Termly 100% attendance certificates
- Termly tutor rewards for best attendance
- Winchcombe Weekly updates on House, Tutor and Individual attendance
- Use of attendance tutor groups to target students with attendance concerns

7. Attendance Monitoring

The attendance team at our school monitors student absence on a daily basis.

A student's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a student's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this.

If a student's absence continue to decline after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an inclusion officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 15%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 15%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Attendance is collected on a lesson-by-lesson basis through the school MIS. The information gathered is used to:

- Track the attendance of individual students
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as annually by Assistant Headteacher (Personal Development). At every review, the policy will be approved by the curriculum committee.

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody

Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

SCHOOL CME REFERRAL FORM – CHILD WHOSE FAMILY WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN

(This form should **not** be used for matters of persistent absence – please contact the Inclusion Service

Your Details	Name:		Date:	
	School			
Child and family details	Forename(s):		Surname	
	DOB:		Gender:	
	Date last in education	in	Date last seen	
	Parent(s) names and all contact details			
Supporting details (Please tick if appropriate)	Child in Care			
	Formerly/Currently known to Social Care			
	Special Educational Needs			
	Traveller			
CME criteria (Please indicate)	All attempts to contact the family have failed (see checklist below)			
	Family known to have moved away but neither destination school nor new home address is known			
	Child did not take up allocated school place and attempts to contact have failed			

Checklist		
Action	Date completed	Outcome
Carry out first day calling (if this is an automated system the school should make telephone contact manually)		

<p>Attempt to get in touch with all known emergency contacts (at various times of day)</p> <p><i>Provide contact details</i></p>		
<p>Gather further information including details of siblings from other agencies, wider school community (e.g. staff, other pupils, friends)</p>		
<p>Home visit within 5 school days if appropriate</p>		
<p>Social Media searches – e.g. contact details of a parent or school noted on Facebook</p>		

Any other additional information relevant to this referral:

If a child is subject to a child protection plan, is a child in care or there are reasons to be concerned for the child's safety, inform Social Care immediately and follow GSCB procedures.

If child is not located following checks, please send referral form to the Access to Education team, **no later than the tenth day of absence** and continue checks as appropriate. The Access to Education team will make further enquiries and attempts to locate the family including making contact with other LAs and CME Officers. In rare cases where the child cannot be located the CME Officer will publish a message on the national Schools 2 Schools secure website. The school should then create a CTF using XXX XXXX.

Please return this with any attachments or relevant information to:

Access to Education Team, Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 2TP
Email: missingpupils@gloucestershire.gov.uk