

## Wilby Church of England (VA) Primary School



### Policy on School Attendance and Punctuality

*Together we are inspired to learn within the family of God's love.  
We encourage one another to reach our full potential within a Christian atmosphere.*

*John 13:34*

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you"*

Wilby CE VA Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a fulltime education which maximises opportunities for each child to reach their true potential. This can only be achieved if a child attends school regularly and punctually. There is a strong statistical link between attendance and attainment; schools with high attendance levels tend to have higher levels of attainment.

#### **Aim**

- To improve the overall percentage attendance of pupils at school.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, staff and governors.

#### **Attendance**

Children are expected to attend school every morning and afternoon for 190 days per year (380 attendance marks) unless there is a good reason for their absence. The school expects all children to have at least a 96% attendance rate.

It is a legal requirement for staff to complete the school register at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. The class teacher will complete the register indicating if a child is present with a black line (/ or \) or if a child is absent with a red circle. The School Bursar or School Administration Assistant will enter attendance information on the SIMS system daily.

#### **Schools Procedure for Absence**

Our school operates a First Day Calling System. This means that parents should contact school **before 8.30am** on the first day of absence to inform us if their child is going to be absent from school. There is an answerphone service for leaving messages. The Bursar will ensure that the class teacher is informed and that the register is marked with the appropriate code. Alternatively, parents can email [bursar@wilby-ce.northants-ecl.gov.uk](mailto:bursar@wilby-ce.northants-ecl.gov.uk).

If by 9.30am, the school has not been notified of the reason why a child is absent, a phone call home will be made. If contact cannot be established by lunchtime, a home visit will be made. If no contact is made by the second day, further steps will be taken, with a possible referral to MASH. If the child's absence extends to 10 days and we still have had no notification of absence, the Educational Inclusion and Partnership team (EIP) will be informed.

If a child is to be absent for one of the other authorised reasons listed below, parents should send a letter to the school in advance, giving the Head Teacher the appropriate details.

## **Categories of Absence**

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised absence (where the school approves the absence)
- Unauthorised absence (where the school is unable to authorise the absence)

### **Authorised Absence**

Absence will be authorised for:

- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- One off, short absence to attend a special occasion such as the wedding of a direct family member or a family bereavement (at the head's discretion)
- Days of religious observance of the religious body to which the parent belongs
- Education off site e.g. transfer days to Secondary Schools
- Approved Educational Activities e.g. to attend a sports tournament, ballet exam

### **Unauthorised absence**

In some circumstances the school will not be able to authorise an absence:

- One-off short absence for pupils' / parents' / siblings' birthday, shopping trips, visits to theme parks or closure of a sibling's school
- Sickness absence will be recorded as unauthorised, if the school is not advised of the reason
- Absence that falls into one of the other categories listed above will be unauthorised, if it is taken without prior permission.

The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Head Teacher. If the Head Teacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

### **Holidays**

The government has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations from 2006. The regulations did allow Head teachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to five school days leave per year. Head Teachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

### **Fines to parents**

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013. The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of

exclusion. Each parent must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations reduced the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

### **Special Leave for Exceptional Circumstances**

Parents are asked to complete an ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME NOTIFICATION FORM (See Appendix 1) explaining clearly the exceptional circumstances for requesting the need to have time away from school. These requests should be made at least two weeks in advance. Parents will receive a written response from the school explaining whether or not special leave has been granted.

If parents choose to take their children out of school during term time, the school will not be responsible for setting work missed or preparing additional work whilst the child is absent. A child's learning needs are based on on-going daily assessments.

The following factors will be taken into account when considering a parents' request:

- Amount of time requested
- Pupil's previous and current attendance record\*
- Proximity to National Testing
- Purpose of leave/circumstances of the request
- Previous requests for special leave.

\*If the pupil's attendance has been below 96% in the last 12 months from the date of the request, special leave will be unauthorised. This will be calculated on a rolling 12 month period, e.g. if special leave request was made on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the pupils attendance will be calculated from 15th January 2020 to 14th January 2021

### **Punctuality**

There are two drop off times at the start of the day 8.45am – 8.50am and 8.55am – 9am. Parents have chosen which time slot they will drop their child off in. Children who arrive at school after their drop off slot has closed, they will be classed as late. Such pupils must report to the school office upon arrival in order that their late attendance can be recorded in the register. If the child arrives 30 minutes after the end of their drop off slot, they will officially be marked as an unauthorised absence.

Pupils who are consistently late disrupt not only their own education but also that of the other children in the class. If a pupil is consistently late, a letter will be sent to their parents asking for their co-operation (See Appendix 2). Should this not be forthcoming, the parents will be invited in for a meeting with the Head teacher (See Appendix 3). If it continues, a referral will be made to the EIP.

**Children not collected after school hours**

There are rare occasions when perhaps due to an emergency, parents are not able to collect their children promptly from school, or make arrangements for their collection at the end of the school day.

In accordance with North Northamptonshire Council policy, if the child is not collected, the school will make enquiries to find the parents using the emergency contact numbers provided by the parents. If after one hour it has not been possible to contact parents / carers then the local Police will be informed of the situation. The Headteacher will also contact MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) to inform them of a possible problem.

**Attendance Rate**

The school has been set a target for attendance of 96%. Therefore we encourage all children's attendance in our school to be above this.

Where a child's attendance falls below 96%, a letter will be sent to parents making clear that their child's attendance must improve and will be monitored for the following half term. (Appendix 2). A degree of common sense will be taken when monitoring the attendance e.g. if a child has only had one period of absence due to an illness, then no action will be taken.

If after the next half term, the attendance fails to hit the 96% target, a parent will be invited into school to discuss how their child's attendance can be improved. We would not meet with a parent where an unauthorised holiday has been taken and historic or current attendance is good or, there has been a medical need for the child. A 96% attendance target will be set for the following term (Appendix 3) and absences will only be authorised, if there is medical evidence (Appendix 4).

An attendance monitoring form will be kept for each child who falls below the 96% target or for a child who is consistently late (See Appendix 4).

If after an agreed period of time, the target has not been met, a Parent Contract Meeting will be arranged. All contracts set 100% attendance target over 5 weeks period. When a parent contract is initiated, any absence must be accompanied by medical evidence for it to be authorised. (Appendix 4)

If this target is not met a referral to the Educational Inclusion and Partnerships Team will be made by the school.

Pupil attendance is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team on a weekly basis, as is their punctuality to school. If any patterns are identified or there is a sudden decrease in a child's attendance, contact may be made with the parents. Parents may be called in for a meeting.

**Single Equality Duty**

At Wilby CE VA Primary School we are committed to ensure that there is equality for all and therefore we follow these points:

- All learners are of equal value.
- We recognise and respect difference

- We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.
- We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist
- We base our practices on sound evidence and information
- We formulate and publish objectives **at least every four years**, specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The Head Teacher will keep the Governors informed about attendance matters every half term in Full Governors meetings.

All staff will be expected to comply with the policy and any issues will be discussed at staff meetings.

This policy was developed through a period of consultation with the staff. It was reviewed and approved by the Governing Body on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2003, reviewed annually with the last review taking place in July 2021. The next review will take place in July 2022.

**NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL  
EDUCATION AND SERVICES**

**ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME NOTIFICATION FORM**

Due to changes in legislation, we are no longer able to authorise leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances.

Please complete this form and return to the **Head Teacher** explaining the exceptional reason for this absence in term time. Based on the information you provide, a decision will be made.

**Name of Student** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class** \_\_\_\_\_

I request leave of absence for the above named child

From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

(number of days \_\_\_\_\_)

(Give dates and how many school days to be taken, do not include weekends or bank holidays etc.)

Please give details of exceptional reason for holiday

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Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Absence Authorised / Unauthorised**

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Signature of Headteacher \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PLANNED ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME (HOLIDAYS)**

We have received the following updated information from the Local Authority stating that The Department for Education (DfE) has announced important amendments to legislation surrounding absence in term time. The following applies to all pupils of statutory school age.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, **the law gives NO entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.** Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. **Head teachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.**

Parents can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without the consent of the school ie: **A Fixed penalty Notice (FPN) of £60.00 would be issued to each parent for each child: ie (two parent family, two children = £240.00 and the following would apply: £60.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120.00 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt.** Should parents choose to take their child on holiday during term time the School may make a referral to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team (formerly Education Entitlement) for consideration of an FPN.

In the academic year 2011, 9.7% of all absences in England were due to the parents taking their children out of school during term time. The high level of absence has led the Department for Education to make this important decision. As a local Authority, we fully appreciate the financial difficulties that some parents face when booking holidays, particularly during school holidays.

However we are expecting that all schools in Northampton introduce firm policies and stringent checks to ensure that there is a significant reduction in the number of absences during term time and challenging schools and parents who do not adhere to the new legislation.





**Wilby CE (VA) Primary School**  
Church Lane, Wilby, Northamptonshire, NN8 2UG  
Tel/Fax: 01933 276491  
E-mail: [head@wilby-ce.northants-ecl.gov.uk](mailto:head@wilby-ce.northants-ecl.gov.uk)

Head Teacher: **Miss Lisa Pearce**

*Together we are inspired to learn within the family of God's love.  
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John 13:34*

Dear

I am writing to you regarding «child's forename»'s attendance / punctuality so far this year. Their attendance has dropped below the target of 96% to ..... / Their punctuality has dropped to ..... which equates to ..... minutes learning time lost.

Whilst I am aware that there may be genuine reasons for this fall I thought that it would be in your interest to know that the absences were at a significant level. Whatever the causes, your child's academic progress could be hindered as a result.

As a result of this, we will be monitoring their attendance / punctuality over the next half term and expect it to be above the target of 96%.

Yours sincerely

Miss Lisa Pearce  
Head Teacher





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Dear

I am writing to you regarding «child's forename»'s attendance / punctuality. Following the letter which was sent to you on ....., your child's attendance / punctuality has failed to meet the 96% target and has been ..... for the past half term.

I would appreciate if you could make a mutually convenient appointment with the school office so we could discuss your child's attendance / punctuality and if there is any support which is needed to ensure your child meets the school's target of 96%.

Yours sincerely

Miss Lisa Pearce  
Head Teacher



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### **Medical Request Form**

To Whom It May Concern

The child named below has been identified as being a potential persistent absentee. Their attendance is being monitored and as such needs proof of attendance of a medical appointment.

Please would you date, sign and stamp this letter.

Kind Regards

Miss Lisa Pearce  
Headteacher

<b>Student Name</b>	
<b>Student Address</b>	
<b>Date of Birth</b>	
<b>Doctor's Name</b>	
<b>Doctors / Surgery Stamp</b>	



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**Attendance / Punctuality Monitoring Form**

Childs Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Attendance Rate	Punctuality Rate
Action Taken	Attendance fails to hit target of 96% Letter sent home	Punctuality fails to hit target of 96% Letter sent home
Date		
Action Taken	Attendance improves to above 96% No further action taken  Attendance fails to hit target of 96% Parents called in for a meeting	Punctuality improves to above 96% No further action taken  Punctuality fails to hit target of 96% Parents called in for a meeting
Date		
Action Taken	Attendance improves to above 96% No further action taken  Attendance fails to hit target of 96% Parent Contract Written	Punctuality improves to above 96% No further action taken  Punctuality fails to hit target of 96% Referral to EIP
Date		
Action Taken	Attendance improves to above 96% No further action taken  Attendance fails to hit target of 96% Referral to EIP	