



ATTENDANCE POLICY – SEPTEMBER 2018

AIMS

- To reach a target set by the school and Education Welfare Service, of at least 96% average attendance over the school year
- To achieve 'above average' attendance
- To reduce the number of 'persistent absentees' and to work with those families to address the issues affecting attendance
- To provide children with a life long, positive attitude to school that begins with good attendance
- To establish good habits ready for the workplace
- To closely monitor the attendance of every child and challenge parents who do not ensure their child attends regularly

PRINCIPLES

We believe that attendance has a huge impact on the attitudes and attainment of children. When children miss time at school they miss sections of learning, particularly if there is an introduction to a subject or a new topic. Missing time can be very disruptive for the child and for the teacher and the rest of the class.

We will emphasise the importance of good attendance as soon as children start school. If a child who has a place in Nursery has not attended for 5 consecutive sessions, without reasonable explanation, they will receive a letter to explain that their attendance is a concern. If there are a further 5 absences, then that place may be offered to someone else on the waiting list.

If a child has more than 20 continuous days of absence and parents are not able to provide medical evidence or a reasonable justification, the child will be removed from roll in line with council procedures. Parents will then need to reapply through the admissions process if they wish their child to return to Willowbrook.

MONITORING

Teachers will take responsibility for the day to day monitoring of attendance of the children in their class. The office staff will send a text message to request a reason for absence for any child who is not marked as present on the register. We will provide training for new staff and students completing registers so that they are completed accurately and consistently to assist with the monitoring process. It is the responsibility of the Vice Principal to examine data on absences supplied by the Office Administrator weekly. The Office Administrator and the Vice Principal will work closely together and update the Principal and Academy Council regularly. Poor attendance (below 95%) will be followed up in person, by telephone or by letter after a discussion with the child's class teacher to find out if there are reasons for the absences. We will also make clear that we expect an explanation for absences every time and for every effort to be made when getting children to school. We will always endeavour to help parents / carers who are having difficulties in getting children to school and have a school based Family Support Worker to support with this.

Any absences that continue to cause concern and that cannot be explained by the class teacher or parents / carers will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). Cases are also referred to the EWO where attendance is authorised by parents / carers but is still a cause for concern; for example when a child is regularly ill on a Monday or a Friday, or when a phone call is made to say a child is ill but



they are seen out. The Academy Council will receive a report on attendance at their termly meetings and will be made aware of any initiative that is going on to raise the profile of good attendance.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEES

Persistent Absentees are defined as children with an attendance percentage below 90%. This is equivalent to having one day off every two weeks. Persistent Absentees miss significant amounts of their education and are in danger of falling behind. Children who are Persistent Absentees will be raised with the EWO and policies will be followed which may include a panel meeting with parents.

AUTHORISED VERSUS UNAUTHORISED

Authorised absence is when a child is genuinely ill enough to not be able to attend school. Parents may be asked to provide evidence of illness once a child has been away for more than two days. Evidence will usually be an appropriate prescription for that child with the correct date. Medical appointments that cannot be made outside school hours are also authorised – school will request a copy of the appointment letter. We expect parents to bring children to school before or after an appointment where possible. We expect parents to make routine doctor and dentist appointments outside the school day. The school may also take account of and authorise other significant and infrequent absences; such as, bereavements or religious festivals.

Keeping your child off for any other reason is unauthorised. We will not authorise absences that could have been avoided and are unnecessary.

PUNCTUALITY

It is vital that children arrive to school on time each day. Children are expected to arrive between 8:45 and 8:55. Any children arriving after this time, must report to the school office. The office staff record latecomers and ask for a reason for absence. Starting the school day on time is very important.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

- Holidays in term time will not be authorised. We follow government legislation with regards to absence requests for children in term time. The legal reference states that schools should not authorise leave of absence unless both of the following apply:
 1. The Principal considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application AND
 2. An application has been made in advance by the parent

Where a child has a sustained leave of absence for a holiday or has a period of unauthorised absence in term time, a penalty Notice will be issued by Leicester City Council (£60 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice and £120 if paid within 28 days. The period for payment has been reduced from 42 and 28 days)

Requests for compassionate leave will be judged on an individual case basis. Parents / carers must request permission for any leave of absence and must complete the holiday / leave of absence request form. If any member of staff believes that a child is absent because of a holiday, the EWO will be asked to make a home visit. A suspected holiday will also incur a penalty notice and it will be up to the parents / carers to prove otherwise once the penalty notice is issued.



INCENTIVES

At Willowbrook, we recognise the importance of building good habits of attendance and support the children in doing so. To raise the profile of good attendance we offer several rewards and incentives:

- Every week at the Friday badge assembly, we present the top infant and top junior classes with a sticker. The class with the most 1st place stickers at the end of the term will be awarded a prize.
- All children who have attended for 100% the week before will go into a draw for a special attendance badge.
- Each term, we offer incentives and rewards to children who attend school 100% of the time or have only one day absence due to illness for a fixed period and no more than 3 lates.
- Children with 100% attendance for the whole academic year receive a certificate and badge.