



## Attendance Policy 2025

Willow Brook's Five C's include both *commitment* and *care* and promote an ethos where families and staff do their best to fulfill each child's potential during their primary years. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is *vital* that they attend regularly. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable.

Everyone in school has a responsibility to improve or maintain excellent attendance and adults in school should model these expectations as well as encouraging them.

### Attendance - Daily Actions

- Children should arrive at school between 8.40am and 8.50am.
- The school gates will be secured at 8.55am and pupils arriving before this time will be given a present mark.
- Any child arriving at school after the gates have closed will be given a late mark.
- Any child arriving late will need to enter the building via the office so that they can be signed in to school.
- If a child arrives at school after 9:15am without prior explanation, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- If a child is going to be absent, parents should contact the school office before 8.40am so that the reason for absence is known and can be recorded in the register correctly. If the absence continues, parents should contact the office **each day** unless a longer period of absence has already been communicated and agreed.
- Staff in school are aware that the register is a legal document and must ensure it is completed promptly and correctly.

### Parents

If we do not hear why a child is absent, the school office will begin to make contact with parents/carers to find the reason for a child's absence. It is vital we know that children are safe and not in a situation that may endanger them, as well as understanding the reason for their absence.

In the case of sustained periods of illness, or regular days being taken ill, we will ask if there is any support or help school can provide to help children to attend or if there any difficulties we should be aware of in the interests of a child's safety and wellbeing. If we feel it is appropriate, we have an obligation to suggest when a child should really be at school rather than being kept at home. We refer parents to this NHS guide to support their decision-making.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

School may record absence as unauthorised if we believe it to be the correct course of action.

At all times we will act in a fair and consistent manner, adhering to the principles within Nottinghamshire's Code of Conduct <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-discipline-and-exclusions/attendance-absence-truancy>

### Positive Rewards

Attendance is rewarded regularly during the school year, with certificates for pupils who have achieved outstanding levels. Whilst we recognise that illness and absence is often unavoidable, we want to recognise resilience and inspire a positive attitude towards attendance and good timekeeping.

### **Monitoring and Management of Absence**

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to monitor attendance and punctuality regularly. The data which is extracted from accurate and up-to-date attendance registers is used to support the more effective management of whole-school attendance matters.

Such data can be used to:

- identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees (attendance below 90%);
- facilitate and encourage early intervention;
- identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism (for example, time lost to term-time holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc.);
- match attendance trends with attainment trends;
- report attendance matters to parents/carers and governors.

### **Actions taken when attendance/punctuality is causing concern**

Every term, pupils whose attendance or punctuality are causing concern are identified and discussed within school. Areas for concern could include: when a child's attendance falls below 90%, where a child has an identifiable pattern of absence (e.g. most Fridays) or where attendance changes suddenly without explanation. On-going lateness will be challenged and reasons given by parents/carers will be recorded and monitored.

Where issues around attendance and punctuality cause concern, the Head Teacher will treat each case individually, in order to provide the most appropriate level of support. If necessary, school will work alongside parents to organise support and guidance from outside agencies such as the Healthy Families Team or mental health professionals (eg: CAMHs). If appropriate, and with parental consent, meetings with appropriate parties will be organised to discuss and review relevant actions with a purpose to increase attendance.

During the spring and summer terms, where attendance is below 90% parents/carers will receive a letter identifying the attendance issue and requesting improvement along with a detailed record of the child's attendance to date.

If attendance continues to decrease after an initial letter and any agreed support, then parents/carers will be contacted to discuss their child's attendance further with the Head Teacher.

If parents/carers do not engage with school throughout this period, they will be informed that the school has been left with no option but to refer to Nottinghamshire County Council's Early Help Services (Attendance Team) or to Social Care, as appropriate.

If, at any time, there are wider concerns about a child's welfare, then safeguarding procedures will be initiated in line with our child protection policy.

### **Leave of Absence During Term Time**

The Government has made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. These state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In these cases, it is the

Head Teacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school, if leave is granted.

As a consequence of these changes, school is no longer able to approve requests for holiday absence for reasons that are not considered to be exceptional such as:

- Availability of cheap holidays or travel arrangements
- Days overlapping with the beginning or end of term or INSET days
- Day trips
- Sporting fixtures or shows
- Holiday dates of siblings at other schools

Parents/Carers looking to take their child out of school during term time, must apply for permission in advance using the 'leave of absence' request form – available from the school office and website. All requests will be considered on an individual basis by the Head Teacher.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

If parents/carers notify the school that there is an intention to leave during the afternoon session for travel or recreation purposes, that session will be counted as an unauthorised absence. Permission should be sought by completing a Leave of Absence Form for all other circumstances.

Absences will not be approved retrospectively.

### **Fixed penalty notices**

If a child misses school without a good reason, local councils and schools can intervene and issue a fine.

In the majority of cases, schools and local authorities will try and provide support to help parents and carers improve a child's attendance first, but if this is not effective or the absence is for unauthorised term time holiday, parents/carers may face paying a fine.

Under national rules, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons in a 10 week period.

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

### **Recording**

Any contact with parents/carers, including meetings, regarding this matter will be noted, signed and dated, along with copies of letters sent to the family. All these will be retained in the child's record. If Nottinghamshire County Council's Early Help Services become involved, the child may have a concern folder kept in accordance with the school's child protection policy. At this point, all attendance documentation will be filed in the child's concern file.

Approved by Governors - June 2024

For review in June 2026