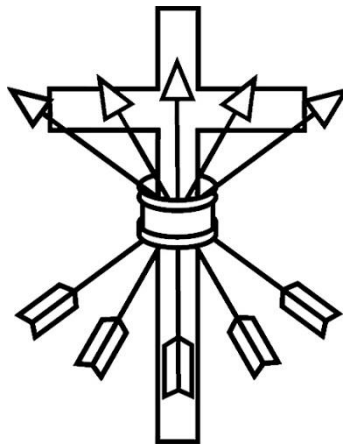


# WADDESDON CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

<b>STATUS OF POLICY:</b>	Statutory
<b>BASED ON LA and “The Key” PROCEDURE</b>	July 2023
<b>COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE:</b>	Curriculum & Student Wellbeing
<b>GOVERNING BODY APPROVAL:</b>	4 October 2023
<b>REVIEW DATE:</b>	Autumn 2024

## Executive Summary

This attendance policy supports parents/carers and pupils.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential if pupils are to benefit fully from their education and we aim to be rigorous in helping them to achieve and maintain a good standard of attendance and punctuality. At Waddesdon CE School, we know that parental support is vital to help students maintain full attendance. Consistent attendance is proven to be beneficial for all students.

The schools focus this year (2023-24) is taken from guidance produced by the Department for Education. The two main strategies are:

1. Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
2. Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.

Our policy clearly identifies the roles of the following stakeholders: Governors, Headteacher, Tutors, Heads of Year, Sixth Form Student Support Officer, Attendance Officer, Pupils, Parents and Carers.

There is a strong focus on achieving the highest level of attendance possible. This will be supported by communicating to parents/carers and pupils both a drop in attendance and an improvement.

The policy is written to support the partnership between home and school. It explains the legal guidance and the schools high standards. There is a minimum expectation that every pupil achieves an attendance rate of over 95%.



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## 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

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

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents/carers and staff share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at Waddesdon CE School are maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

The following vision statement which has been agreed by the Governing Body sets down the ethos of the school and this policy needs to be viewed within this context:

*We believe that the purpose of education is to enable all people to flourish individually and collectively so that they live a life of value. As a community, we strive to achieve these aims, believing genuinely and unequivocally in the capacity and potential of every child.*

*Our ethos is rooted and grounded in the Christian values of love, compassion, kindness and inclusion which foster dignity and respect for all. Students tell us that they feel safe at Waddesdon School. Self-confidence, self-belief and agency are nurtured through praise, encouragement, acknowledgement of success and celebration of achievement.*

*Our vibrant and positive culture enables our students to fulfil their potential as self-disciplined, responsible and productive citizens who are proud to claim that they are a part of the Waddesdon tradition, the 'Waddesdon Way'.*

*Standards and expectations are high and learning is developed through a broad range of engaging and rich educational opportunities. We are a dedicated and motivated community which enables our students to work hard and achieve highly. However, our school cannot simply be measured by our outstanding outcomes alone; it is also measured the development and character of our young people.*

### 1.1 Safeguarding

The governors at Waddesdon CE School view attendance as a safeguarding issue and in accordance with the school's Attendance Policy, absences are rigorously pursued and recorded. The school, in partnership with the appropriate agencies, takes action to pursue and address all unauthorised absences in order to safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care.

The Attendance Policy identifies how individual cases are managed and how we work proactively with parents to ensure that they understand why attendance is important. In certain cases, this may form part of a Parenting Contract.

We implement the statutory requirements in terms of monitoring and reporting children missing education (CME) and taking off roll and understand how important this practice is in safeguarding children and young people.

## **2. Legislation and guidance**

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](#)
- 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 Body**

The Governing Body 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 pupils

### **3.3 The Attendance Officer**

The School Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Leadership Team, Heads of Year, Sixth Form Student Support Officer and form tutors
- Generates attendance congratulations and concern letters, supported by the Office Staff and agreed with Heads of Year
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Works with County Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advises the LMT when parental contracts are issued

### **3.4 Sixth Form Student Support Officer**

- The Sixth Form Student Support Officer works with the Attendance Officer to analyse attendance data in the Sixth Form context. They speak to students and liaise with Sixth Form form tutors, the Head of Year 12/13 and the Head of Sixth Form about intervention.

### **3.5 Form Tutors**

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. They provide an initial contact point for parents and carers. They support individual pupils with early attendance support and make contact home.

### **3.6 Heads of Year**

Heads of Year are responsible for having an overview of their year group. They approve and sign congratulatory and concern letters to go home. They make phone calls home after form tutor contact if no improvement in attendance seen despite support. They will attend face to face meetings with parents/carers and support initial school contract meetings.

### **3.7 Office Staff (Thorp Office and the Sixth Form Administrator)**

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. If no contact is received from parents/carers in the allotted timescale each day, they make contact home to check parents/carers are aware of the absence and find out the reason.

### **3.8 Parents and Carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return

- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Take holidays outside of term times

### **3.9 Pupils**

- Attend registration and every timetabled session on time.

## **4. Recording Attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 8.35am. The register for the second session will be taken at 11.45am and will be kept open until 11.50am

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents are able to notify the school by phone, email, letter or in person.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

## **4.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

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

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 5.

## **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

When a student arrives late to school they should sign in at the Thorpe reception area or Sixth Form Study Centre, entering the time of arrival and reason for lateness. All lateness is regularly monitored by the school, recognising the disruption to lessons and learning. Recurring lateness will almost certainly result in the award of detentions or other sanctions.

## 4.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children and risk prosecution if they fail in this duty. It is therefore very important for parents and school staff to work closely together to overcome any problems which may affect a student's attendance.

Waddesdon CE School places a high value on students' regular attendance and good punctuality and monitors this daily. School staff also work closely with the county attendance team where attendance or punctuality does not meet the school's rigorous expectations

Waddesdon CE School will write to parents if they have concerns for a child's attendance

## 4.6 Reporting to parents

This Attendance Policy will be communicated through:

- A précis in the parents' prospectus
- A summary in the Parent Handbook which is issued to all parents and students annually
- Pupil review and guidance meetings
- On the school website

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are where requests are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils 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 pupil is attending educational provision

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.



- 5 minutes late a day equates to **3** days out of 190 lost each academic year.
- 10 minutes late is **6.5** days lost.
- 15 minutes late is **10** days of education lost.
- Being late can lead to **anxiety** and feeling **unsettled**.
- Arriving after registration may also result in an **unauthorised absence**.

Leave of absence may not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances, in which case the Headteacher determines the number of school days that a child can be away from school.

If holiday leave is taken without the school's prior approval, this may be viewed as undermining the good order and discipline of the school and could be referred to the County Attendance Team.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

## **5.2 Legal sanctions**

In the event of persistent non-attendance, the school works closely with the County attendance team to help remove any barriers which may be preventing a student from fully accessing the education to which he/she is entitled.

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 pupil 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

Waddesdon will send parents an attendance letter if pupils are causing attendance concerns. (Appendix 2) If these concerns continue parents will receive a County Attendance Referral Letter which explains the role of the Attendance Team and the parental attendance contract.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Good attendance improves peer relationships, allows students to achieve their potential and therefore contributes positively to the school community

Students with good and improved attendance receive letters of congratulation. Students' attendance is included on all school references and is requested by prospective colleges and employers and used as part of their admissions and interview procedure.

Attendance is promoted by Form Tutors, Heads of Year and as part of our whole school and year group assemblies.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to contact the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are expected to contact the school each day their child is ill.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving the County Attendance Officer

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

The school regularly monitors patterns of attendance and lateness. Students with attendance or lateness concerns are regularly reviewed and decisions are taken about additional support that may be required or sanctions that should be applied. Additionally, such concerns will also be shared with the county attendance team, who may decide to take action against parents.

Information about patterns of attendance and lateness is also shared with Governors. Additionally, data is collected directly from the school system by the LA and the DCSF.

### **7.1 Children Missing in Education (CME)**

The school follows the Local Education Authorities policy regarding the protocol for children missing education. (Protocol for children missing education. September 2017 Version 9) The purpose of this document is to make sure that children not receiving a suitable education are identified quickly, and effective tracking systems and support arrangements are put in place.

Children missing education are:

“Children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school, for example, at home, privately, or in alternative provision.”

Children not receiving a suitable education are at increased risk of a range of negative outcomes that could have long term damaging consequences for their life chances.

## **7.2 Children with health needs who cannot attend school**

- Suitable education is arranged for pupils on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs
- Pupils, staff and parents understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority

### **7.2.1 Legislation and guidance**

- This section reflects the requirements of the [Education Act 1996](#).
- It also based on guidance provided by our local authority:

If a child cannot attend school due to health reasons, and their illness or injury results in them being away from school for 15 days or more, we are responsible for arranging education if suitable education is not otherwise being arranged. The following guidance details how we will arrange this education through the commissioning of a:

- Home Tuition Service
- Hospital Teaching Service at Stoke Mandeville Hospital

[Home Tuition and Hospital Teaching Services Guidance](#)

### **7.2.2. The responsibilities of the school**

All schools in Buckinghamshire are required to ensure that all children with medical conditions, in terms of both physical and mental health, are properly supported in school so that they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential.

### **7.2.3 If the school makes arrangements**

Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

If parents/carers have concerns that their child may be absent from school they should discuss this with their child's school. The school will then be able to advise on how they will ensure that the child does not fall behind with their studies and may consider a referral to the Home Tuition Services if it is appropriate and there is supporting medical evidence from a Community Paediatrician, Hospital Consultant or CAMHS Consultant.

### **7.2.4 If the local authority makes arrangements**

If the school cannot make suitable arrangements, Buckinghamshire County Council will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children.

In cases where the local authority makes arrangements, the school will:

- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the pupil
- Share information with the local authority and relevant health services as required
- Help make sure that the provision offered to the pupil is as effective as possible and that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully

When reintegration is anticipated, work with the local authority to:

- Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school, allowing the pupil to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible
- Enable the pupil to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through newsletters, emails, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons from their school)
- Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the assistant head teacher responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Governing Body.

## **9. Links with other policies**

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil 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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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 pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day