



Policy for Attendance

SECTION 1 – POLICY

Under Section 199 of the 1993 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where he, or she, is a registered pupil.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2013 also apply.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our 'Every Lesson Counts – WHCS Guide to Attendance' (ELC) document.

Mission Statement

William Harding seeks to ensure that each and every pupil receives a full-time education that enables them to develop into confident, self-aware and resilient learners. We strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment in which each and every member of the school community feels wanted and secure. Our staff will work in partnership with our children and their families to ensure good attendance and punctuality.

What is attendance?

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time wherever possible to ensure that they are able to make the most of the educational experiences offered at William Harding Combined School. We also aim to raise awareness of the importance of attendance with our families.

Why is attendance at school important?

'The future for young people is changing rapidly. The nature of employment is being transformed by the implementation of new technology and global economic factors. Young people need to achieve higher educational levels than at any time in the past. Non attendance at school, even for short periods, may jeopardise their future opportunities by limiting their educational experience'.

'Here Today, Here Tomorrow' Gulbenkian Foundation Booklet

How shall we achieve improvement?

We aim to improve the levels of attendance through continuing to:

- promote a safe, caring and supporting school ethos;
- provide a clean, attractive and pleasant physical environment;
- promote a positive attitude towards school;
- seek to enable all pupils to feel happy and secure;
- deal with any difficulties experienced by pupils in a positive manner and in line with our pastoral care policy;
- seek to improve parental involvement;
- monitor attendance regularly;
- recognise high and significantly improved attendance of groups and individuals

We will use a variety of strategies which seek to raise levels of attendance and punctuality.

Target Setting

William Harding Combined School will adopt a target figure for attendance each year. The overall school target will not be lower than a minimum 95% attendance.

Equal Opportunities and Attendance

In circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend school help can be given in relation to:

- catching up with work missed;
- long absences, providing distance learning materials;
- teaching assistants and support staff providing individual attention where appropriate;
- personal attention and encouragement from class teachers and other specified staff;
- differentiation of tasks to best suit the needs of the individual pupil;

SECTION 2 – ATTENDANCE GUIDANCE (See also the ELC document)

Parents' Responsibilities

- Parents are by law required to make sure that their children who are on the school register attend school regularly and punctually.
- Parents are responsible for letting the school know about any pupil absence on the first day of the absence.
- If their child is not in school parents should indicate when he/she is likely to return.

Parents can inform the school of their child's absence by any of the following methods:

- telephone
- personal contact
- letter signed by parent, even if written by another family member

School Procedures (See also the ELC document)

The School uses SIMS to store and monitor our legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance. This system consists of specialised software and OMR sheets.

Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Registers are returned to the School Office after the closure of the registration period.

Absence

Parents can be taken to court under the Education Act 1996 if they do not make sure their child attends school, without reason (as defined in law) and if the child has too many unauthorised absences.

It is the school's decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. A note or telephone message from a parent will not count as an authorised absence if the reasons given are not acceptable to the school.

If any children are repeatedly absent from school without any communication from the parent, it is our policy to:

- make a phone call to establish the reason for the absences;
- if absence continues, send a letter to the parent with a reply slip to enquire as to the reason for the absence;
- follow up with a further phone call if there is no response, or if we have concerns that the child might be truanting;

The following table shows examples of authorised and unauthorised absences:

Examples of Authorised Absence	Examples of Unauthorised Absence
Illness, medical or dental appointment. Provided the school is satisfied the illness and appointments are genuine	Where pupil misses registration and is unable to give an acceptable reason
Special occasions as agreed with the school as an authorised absence *	Additional days taken for special occasions or days other than those specified by the school
An agreed period for family bereavement *	Absence for more than the agreed period.
Religious observance days; the number and timing of each will be determined by the school, eg. one day for each Eid festival	Additional days taken other than those specified by the school
Off-site activities, eg music exams, participation in music festivals, representative sporting event during school time *	Attendance at any event without prior agreement with the school
Term time leave, as agreed by the school in accordance with the guidance given in this document *	Term time leave without prior authorisation by the school
	Several medical related absences where attendance is below 90% *
	Looking after brothers or sisters *
	Shopping during school hours
	Going to the airport to meet or say goodbye to relatives *

* Authorised leave of absence for these situations may be considered by the Headteacher.

Timing of the School Day

	Session starts	Register taken	Registration period closes	Register closes	Session ends
AM - Infants	8:50	8:55	9:00	9:30	12:00
AM – Juniors	8:50	8:55	9:00	9:30	12:15
PM – Infants	1:00	1:00	1:05	1:35	3:00
PM – Juniors	1:00	1:00	1:05	1:35	3:15

Lateness

- Pupils arriving after the registration period has closed at 9:00am and 1:05pm will be recorded as late for that school session.
- Pupils arriving after 9:00am, or 1:05pm, must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded for that school session.
- Pupils arriving after 9:30am, or 1:05pm, will be recorded 'Unauthorised Late'. This will be considered an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given, for example a medical appointment. Lateness is monitored.
- Action to address lateness will be taken in line with the school's strategy to improve punctuality:

Persistent absentees (See also the ELC document)

Pupils whose attendance is less than **85%** are referred to as "Persistent Absentees" by the DfE. William Harding Combined School will monitor the attendance of persistent absentees rigorously and more regularly than other pupils.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

All schools are required by law to keep an attendance register and to mark any absence as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. We must publish our attendance figures at least twice a year. A child's attendance record is printed on their school report and in this way is reported to parents. Children's attendance records are also carried with them to their next class or school.

Leave of Absence during term time and extended trips overseas

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2013 relate to Holidays in Term Time, Penalty Notices and Deletions from the school register. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

William Harding Combined School will not grant any extended leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Absence for anything other than through illness or medical reasons during term time is actively discouraged.

Our policy is detailed below:

- Parents must make an appointment with the Headteacher to discuss any application for leave of absence during term time.
- Only in exceptional circumstances will leave be granted. Exceptional circumstances are defined as:
 1. Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specific time of year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in a school holiday
 2. Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon duty abroad
 3. Where a holiday is recommended as part of a child's rehabilitation from a medical issue. Evidence should be provided
- Non-exceptional circumstance include:
 - Funeral
 - Wedding
 - Bereavement
 - Preference for undergoing medical treatment abroad
 - Ill relation abroad
 - Religious events
- If a request for authorised Leave of Absence is granted then it is unlikely that another such request will be granted for the duration of that child's time at the school.
- No parent can demand Leave of Absence for the sole purpose of taking a holiday.
- In considering any application for leave during term time, we will take into account:
 1. The child's previous attendance record; if this falls below 95% it is unlikely the request will be granted.
 2. The child's progress; parents of children who are already experiencing difficulty with the curriculum may find their request declined.
 3. National testing; Leave of Absence will not be authorised for pupils in Year 6 from January until they have sat their SATs in May.
 4. Leave of Absence will not normally be authorised at the start of Year 3 for pupils transferring from Year 2 to the Junior School.

Penalty Notices

Buckinghamshire County Council's Education Welfare Service monitor all school attendance rates. It is Buckinghamshire County Council's policy to issue Penalty Notices for persistent absence and unauthorised extended periods of absence from school. Penalty notices are currently £60 per parent, per child.

Statutory School Age

Children become of statutory school age at the start of the term on or after their fifth birthday. However, to promote good, lifelong school attendance habits the principles of this policy will be applied to all pupils on roll at William Harding Combined School.

The Governing body of William Harding Combined School has agreed to adopt this policy.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.

Policy updated: February 2014

Staff responsible: Adele Howson

This policy was ratified by the Governing body on: 4th March 2014

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body: (signature)

Mrs D Jones – Chair of Governors