

Winchelsea



All Individuals Matter

WINCHELSEA PRIMARY SCHOOL
RUSKINGTON

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Whole School Attendance Policy

The responsibility for promoting attendance at Winchelsea Primary School & Nursery is shared by everyone involved in the school, pupils, parents, staff and Governors.

Aims

Our attendance policy touches all aspects of our school life and relates to our school Mission Statement.

- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To recognise the individual needs of each pupil and family with regard to attendance.

Collection and analysis of data about attendance enables the school to work towards targets set by the DFE and Local Authority.

1. Expectations:

1.1 We expect the following from all our pupils:

- Pupils attend school regularly and achieve 95%+ attendance over the academic year.
- Pupils arrive on time and are appropriately prepared for the school day.
- Pupils will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

1.2 We expect the following from parents:

- To not take holidays in the school year/during term time.
- Ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Ensure that they contact the school before 9.30 am, or as soon as is reasonably practical, whenever their child is unable to attend for **every day** they are absent, unless agreed otherwise during the initial call.
- Ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework and have their book bag (including their reading book and reading record) and P.E kits etc.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.
- Contact the child's teacher or the Head teacher, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school or their attendance.

1.3 Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early telephone contact from the school office when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason. Home visits will be made if telephone contact is not successful after 5 days.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member

of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the student or their parent).

- Recognition and reward for good attendance.
- A high quality of education that engages pupils and meets their differing needs.

2. Managing Absence:

2.1 Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session (9 am and 1 pm) and within 30 minutes of the start of the session.
- Attendance checks in the morning daily, by the office team, and at other appropriate times, such as the end of term analysis or for Governors' meetings.
- First day calling for unexplained absence and home visits for any absence causing concern.
- Recording of good attendance on individual End of Academic Year Reports.
- A certificate for 100% attendance for 100% attendance achieved throughout the year. (Attendance is 100% if there has been no absence OR 100% minus any time missed due to agreed medical appointments).
- An Attendance Concern letter will be raised if attendance falls below 90% OR is on a consistent decline.
- Identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems, including the sharing of relevant information with a destination school or other agencies.
- The Head teacher will arrange meetings with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school and work to resolve the issues.
- Integris G2 system is used to provide valuable year group, class and pupil level attendance data, which enables speedy analysis and timely responses by the Head teacher and SEND team.

3. Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend, the school needs to respond effectively.

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone or by a home visit after 5 days of no contact from the Head teacher or her nominated member of staff.
- Absences messages will be put on the Integris G2 registers and any 'paper' messages retained in the Attendance folder.
- Where there is no response or contact made, a home visit from the Head teacher or her nominee may be arranged.
- Where non-attendance continues, the class teacher will discuss with the Head teacher and further action planned. This may, in appropriate cases, result in a referral to Children's Services or Fixed Penalty Warnings or Notices (fines).
- If a pupil is missing for 5 days and we do not know where they are, we will report them to the Local Authority 'Missing from Education' team.
- If there is no improvement, then the case will be discussed again with Children's Services, with a view to a formal referral being made to the Customer Service Centre (safeguarding), if one has not already been

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made at an earlier stage. If a referral had already been made, then the case will be reviewed and further action planned, which could lead to prosecution under the Lincolnshire County Council's Prosecution Policy.

4. Persistent Absence

In England, good attendance at school is 95%+ for the academic year. Lincolnshire County Council class **persistent absence** as 15% of the academic year (28 days/56 sessions), including both authorised and unauthorised absences combined. If a child's absence is a cause for concern, a meeting will initially be requested with the parent and then a School Attendance Panel will be called to ensure that the school and the family are actively working together to address the issue. An action plan will be drawn up and agreed by both parties and a timescale for improvement will be set. If attendance does not improve, further warning notices will be issued and further action will be taken, possibly resulting in court action being taken.

5. Medical Issues

Pupils with on-going long-term medical issues will also have their attendance monitored, but their absence for medical appointments will be taken into account. The school may request the support from the Children and Young Person's Nursing Team.

The school will require evidence from a child's doctor or medical specialist, along with copies of appointment letters etc. where possible. The school may request permission to contact these professionals for more information about a child's health and medical needs, in order that absence can be minimized. If there is a hospital appointment booked for a morning or afternoon we will expect you to attend school for the other sessions, ***having a hospital appointment does not enable you to automatically have a whole day off school.***

If the school or the Nursing Team request that referrals are made to specialists, a timescale of actions will need to be agreed. Authorised absence for medical matters are normally granted for pupil illnesses.

Medical appointments are to see: specialists, paediatricians, therapists (e.g. Physiotherapists/ Speech and Language) & hospital professionals.

Please note that this DOES NOT include optician and dental appointments under routine procedures and check-ups - these must be made out of normal school hours.

6. Absence during term time/holiday requests

Children of school age must attend regularly and on time during term time.

Your child can only miss school if:

- They are too ill.
- The school has authorised the absence.

‘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.**’

‘Exceptional’ in this context is being of unique and significant emotional or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another and whilst it will be important to look at the whole situation in making decisions about any individual request, the normality will be that requests will be refused.

If parents wish to make a holiday request then they must write a letter to the Head teacher, at least one month prior to the date of departure. You will be informed of the final decision both verbally and in writing.

Authorised absence may be granted for a death in the family or funeral or for a specific religious observation.

If you do not get permission and you take your child out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If the decision by the parents is to still intend to take their child/ren on holiday, the Governors may decide to issue a **Fixed Penalty Notice Warning letter/notice** if a pupil has accrued unauthorised absence from school and the school has referred the matter to the Governors.

A **Fixed Penalty Notice**, under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, carries a fine. Non-payment of this fine can result in prosecution on the grounds that the parent is failing to secure their child’s school attendance.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) are issued per parent, per child and are an alternative to prosecution. The current penalty is:

- £60, if paid within 21 days.
- £120, if paid between 21 and 28 days.

After 28 days, we may prosecute you.

For more details on what legal action can be taken, visit GOV.uk (URL = <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>).

Paying a Fixed Penalty Notice

How to pay the fine can be found on the fixed penalty notice. You can pay a FPN by bank transfer, cash, cheque or postal order.

For more details, read the Fixed Penalty Notice – Code of Conduct
(URL = <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/2602/fixed-penalty-notice-code-of-conduct>).

7. Reintegration

The Head teacher and SEND team will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme. Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees and the programme of support, if this is required.

8. School organisation

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education. In addition, specific responsibilities are allocated to individual staff as follows:

8.1 Head teacher:

- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- To liaise with the Children Missing Education team at the Local Authority.
- To organise and conduct School Attendance Panels, sometimes in conjunction with the CME team.
- Set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.

8.2 Class teacher:

To complete registers accurately and on time.

- Attendance is recorded am and pm on Integris G2, this is then checked by a member of the office staff. A present or absent mark should be filled in for every child on their register and not leave any blank spaces.
- To complete any **known reason** for an absence.
- If unsure which code to use, refer to the school office.
- To refer any unexplained absence to the office team to follow up.
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.
- To notify the office team if a child does not return from lunch.

8.3 Office team:

- School administrative staff can play a vital role in supporting the school's attendance and absence management strategies.
- Telephone and paper absence messages to be recorded and filed accordingly.
- Maintain a "Late" and a "Going Home" register if a child needs to leave school before end of school day.
- To report to the Head Teacher on attendance issues.
- To analyse absence as requested by the Head teacher/Governors and liaise with the Head teacher over actions to be taken.

- To make sure all reasons for absence are recorded correctly in the register.
- If a child goes home for lunch and does not return, the office team will be informed and will take action to ascertain the child's whereabouts and safety. If a child leaves the premises for a valid reason authorised by a class teacher at lunch time, the absence board in the office must be completed to ensure the register is coded correctly for the afternoon session.
- To make all first day calls and arrange home visits with the Head teacher, as appropriate.

8.4 Governors:

- Governor(s) may be given a specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies.
- Governors can play a valuable role through representation at school attendance panels, parents evenings etc.
- Request regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings.

9. Liaising with External Agencies

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people.

Other Agencies that can be used where appropriate in individual cases are:

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services (BOSS).
- Educational Psychologists/CAMHS-Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Service.
- Social Care or the Early Help Team.
- Local Police or PSCOs

Ratified in January 2021.

To be reviewed again under guidance from the LA when their model policy is updated.

Signed: _____
Chair of Governors

Date: _____