



# **Wilson's School Attendance Policy**

Reviewed by	Approved by Trust Board	Date for next review:
TWC	Summer 2023	Summer 2025

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## 1. 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](#)
- [Providing remote education: guidance for schools 2023](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 2. Aims

Wilson's School recognises the strong link between wellbeing, attainment and attendance and the important role parents play in ensuring that the attendance of their child is as high as possible.

A pupil's progress is severely hampered if they do not regularly attend school. To illustrate, 90% attendance:

- is an average of one day out of school per fortnight
- is equal to 18 days of absence, or 90 hours of missed lessons across a school year
- is equal to half a school year, or 450 hours of lost education, over five years

The Department for Education guidance states:

"Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. ***This means their child must attend every day that the school is open***, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given

permission for an absence in advance from the school.” (Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, 2022, our emphasis)

<b>Wilson’s: Attendance Definitions</b>	
100-98%	Expected (and achieved by most pupils)
97-95%	Satisfactory
94-91%	A cause for concern
90% or below	A serious cause for concern (persistent absence as defined by the DfE)

The school sets the highest aspirations for our pupils’ attendance and punctuality by:

- ensuring a safe and kind environment for learning, building pupils' confidence and actively promoting their wellbeing
- enabling all pupils to reach the highest levels of academic enjoyment and achievement
- enabling our pupils to think independently and to feel secure in taking intellectual risks
- giving all of our pupils every opportunity to engage with the spiritual, moral and cultural dimensions of life
- providing every pupil with opportunities for achievement and enjoyment beyond the classroom
- providing our pupils with the skills and attitudes needed to thrive in Higher Education and proceed to satisfying careers and fulfilling lives

In addition, the school specifically promotes good attendance and punctuality by:

- proactively seeking to reduce reasons for absence and lateness
- acting early to address patterns of absence or lateness, thereby reducing the likelihood of persistent problems.
- building strong relationships with families and (where necessary) external agencies to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school regularly

## **2.1 Getting Help**

While the school works closely with parents to provide support and guidance, it is the parents’ legal responsibility to ensure their child’s regular attendance at and punctual arrival to school. As partners in their child’s attendance, it is very important that parents speak with the relevant Head of Year or Director of Key Stage at the earliest opportunity if they need support to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child. The school also provides extensive support to pupils’, including for their wellbeing, through the deployment of the school’s Wellbeing Lead and the key stage Pupil Support Managers.

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **3.1 The Trust Board**

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- promoting the importance of school attendance and punctuality by reviewing and approving the school’s policy
- making sure school leaders, including the Head, fulfil policy expectations and statutory duties
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance and punctuality data presented by senior leaders
- making sure relevant staff receive adequate training on attendance

Attendance and punctuality are monitored through the Performance Committee on behalf of the Trust Board.

### **3.2 The Head**

The Head is responsible for:

- overseeing the implementation of this policy by the relevant senior leader
- monitoring school-level absence data and overseeing reports to the Performance Committee
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance and punctuality strategies
- considering requests for leave of exceptional absence alongside other senior leaders
- requesting and issuing fixed-penalty notices, via the Local Authority

### **3.3 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance and Punctuality**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- leading attendance and punctuality across the school
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, including by benchmarking
- overseeing and analysing data
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance or punctuality
- providing required attendance and punctuality reports to the Head and Trustees, including analysis of the attendance of specific groups such as disadvantaged or SEND cohorts
- working with the Heads of Year, Directors of Key Stage, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and Local Authority to challenge persistent absence
- advising the Head when to request that the Local Authority should issue a fixed-penalty notice

**The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr Coop, Deputy Head.**

### **3.4 Directors of Key Stage and Heads of Year**

It is the responsibility of the relevant Director of Key Stage or Head of Year to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance and punctuality concerns by:

- monitoring the attendance and punctuality of their key stage or year group
- working with pupils and parents in addressing concerns and resolving problems
- working with the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and punctuality in addressing concerning patterns of absence or punctuality, or persistent absence
- overseeing the process of welcoming a pupil back after an extended period of absence

In addition, the relevant Director of Key Stage will:

- work with the key stage Pupil Support Managers and the SENCO in supporting the attendance and punctuality of disadvantaged and/or SEND pupils
- consider routine leave of absence requests
- oversee all cases of school refusal (see section 4.3.3)
- meet with the EWO as required to discuss specific attendance and punctuality concerns

### **3.5 Form Tutors**

Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance and punctuality each day via the school's MIS system, using the correct codes, and submitting this information at the start of each tutor period.

Any pupil arriving after the registration bell has sounded, whatever the reason, must be marked as late.

### **3.6 School Support Staff**

School support staff play an important role in safeguarding pupils in relation to attendance (see section 3.1 of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure). They will:

- take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record appropriate notes on the school's MIS system
- contact the parents of children who have not arrived at school and have not been reported absent
- administer parental requests for leave of absence in advance of any planned absence
- refer queries from parents to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance and punctuality
- provide administrative support to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, Directors of Key Stage and Heads of Year in relation to attendance and punctuality
- administer amendments to registers (see section 4.1)
- prepare applications for fixed-penalty notices on behalf of the Head

### **3.7 Parents**

Parents are expected to:

- ensure that their child attends every timetabled morning (AM) and afternoon (PM) session fully prepared and on time
- telephone the school to report their child's absence before 08:00 am on the day of any absence and on each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return. NB: reports of absence must be communicated by telephone and not by email (see section 4.3)
- provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- ensure that, where possible, medical, dental (including orthodontic) and other appointments for their child are made outside of the school day to help avoid unnecessary disruption to their child's education

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to attend every timetabled AM and PM session and lesson, fully prepared and on time.

## **4. Recording Attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance Register**

The school will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the AM session of each school day and once during the PM session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- present (AM: "/", PM: "\")
- absent ("N")

- late (“L”)
- attending an approved off-site educational activity or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances, using the appropriate code

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.

The school will also record:

- whether the absence is authorised or not
- the nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- the nature of the circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry on the attendance register will be kept for the duration of the pupil’s time on roll.

## **4.2 AM and PM Registration**

Pupils in years 7 to 11 must arrive in school by 08:25. The register for the AM session will be taken at 08:25 and will be kept open until 11:00. The register for the PM session will be taken at 14:05 and will be kept open until 14:45.

Members of the Sixth Form must arrive and register electronically by 08:30 on each school day and the register will be kept open until 11:00. They must register for the PM session by 14:25 (14:00 on Friday) and the register will be kept open until 14:45.

### **4.2.1 Punctuality**

All pupils arriving late before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

All pupils arriving late after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Pupils in years 7 to 11 arriving after the 08.25 bell must register with the attendance secretary in the foyer before going to lessons. They will be marked late regardless of the reason.

All pupils (years 7 to 13) arriving after the start of period 1 at 08:35 will receive 2 late marks.

## **4.3 Unplanned Absence**

Parents must telephone the school by 08:00 am on the first day of their child’s absence and every day thereafter and follow directions on the answering service.

Parents must state:

- (i) their child’s name
- (ii) form
- (iii) the reason for absence

The Attendance Secretary will transfer this information each day to the register.

Absence due to illness will be marked as authorised unless the school has a concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt (for example where there is a pattern without supporting medical evidence), the school may ask the pupil's parent/s to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate documentation. The school 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.

Should a pupil be absent without contact from parents, this will be treated as a safeguarding concern regarding the child's welfare. Contact will be attempted by the school and external agencies will be involved where necessary.

### **4.3.1 Continuing Absence**

Parents must telephone the school by 08:00 on each subsequent day of absence.

In line with the latest statutory guidance ([Providing remote education: guidance for schools](#)) the school will provide remote education in the form of resources, such as textbooks / workbooks (as well as teacher guidance via e.g. email) in only rare circumstances where prolonged isolation at home is required as a result of an official specialist medical diagnosis and not during short periods of absence (e.g. due to isolation for an infectious illness).

### **4.3.2 Frequent Absence**

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absence, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s. The assistance of external agencies (such as the EWO) may also be required.

Legal measures might have to be taken such as the issuing of a fixed-penalty notice (further information about legal interventions can be found in [Working together to improve school attendance](#)).

### **4.3.3 School Refusal**

The relevant Director of Key Stage oversees all cases of school refusal. With the support of parents, the relevant Head of Year, the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and outside agencies where appropriate, a program of re-admittance will be set up for the pupil. This could involve a range of strategies depending on the needs of the individual, for example:

- reduced timetable
- parental support
- mentoring
- blended approaches to teaching

### **4.3.4. A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an extended period of unavoidable absence the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils. The relevant Director of Key Stage or Head of Year will oversee this process.

### **4.3.5 Avoidable Absence**

Occasionally there is widespread disruption to travel that cannot be foreseen (e.g. weather, transport or other related issues). The DfE considers a pupil's home to be within safe walking distance if it is within 3 miles of the school ([Working together to improve school attendance](#)). A pupil whose absence is due to such disruption and who could reasonably have made alternative arrangements to get to school, including walking, will have their absence marked as unauthorised on the register.

### **4.3.6 Unexplained Absence**

Where any pupil the school expects to attend school does not attend, or stops attending without notification, the school will:

- telephone the pupil's parent/s on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach the parents, or any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will escalate the absence as a safeguarding concern

- identify whether the absence is approved or not and the code to be used on the register
- call the parent/s on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the EWO or other external agencies such as the police

#### 4.4 Sixth Form

In addition to the points above, further details of the routines for monitoring Sixth Form attendance and punctuality can be found in the Sixth Form Agreement. An absolute minimum of 90% attendance for each subject is required by all pupils to guarantee entry to the relevant examinations. The school reserves the right not to enter pupils who fall below this level of attendance.

#### 4.5 Reporting to Parents

The school regularly informs parents about their child's attendance via daily e-communication, as well as discussing individual attendance, absence levels and punctuality as is necessary.

### 5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

#### 5.1 Approval for Term-time Absence

The Head will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' and if the pupil's attendance is at or close to the expected levels. A leave of absence is granted at the Head's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request and the pupil's prior attendance record

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- illness and medical/dental appointments that cannot be arranged for outside of the school day (see sections 4.2 for more detail)
- 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 the exclusivity of the day of observance
- study leave, where this is decided to be appropriate for examinations organised by the school

Parents must complete the necessary pro-forma and return it to the school giving at least ten days of notice. The Director of Key Stage or a member of SLT will then decide as to whether the absence is approved or not and this decision is final. Where there are exceptional circumstances, the decision must be taken by the Head.

The pupil's parent/s must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept on file.

##### 5.1.1 Medical and Dental Appointments

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as:

- the pupil's parent/s notifies the school in advance of the appointment
- reasonable measures have been taken to arrange the appointment outside of the school day
- the time requested is reasonable and kept to a minimum
- authorisation for the absence has been given – when considering whether or not to authorise a planned absence, the pupil's prior attendance will be taken into account



### **5.1.2 Holidays in Term Time**

Holidays in term time will not be authorised. Parents of pupils who take holiday in term time may be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

Pupils who miss school due to unauthorised term time holiday could be prevented from taking part in other school-based activities (such as sporting fixtures) that would necessitate further absence from lessons, so that further disruption to the delivery of the planned curriculum is minimised.

The school will not provide work for pupils whose absence is unauthorised.

### **5.2 Legal Sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent 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 may take into account:

- the 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 or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years (or sooner if required by changes within the DfE guidance on attendance) by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust Board.

## **7. Links with Other School Policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure
- Code of Conduct
- Sixth Form Agreement

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario	Counts towards 90% attendance requirement?
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration	Yes
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration	Yes
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed	Yes
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school	Yes
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered	Yes
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment	Yes
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school	Yes
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school	Yes
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement	Yes

Code	Definition	Scenario	Counts towards 90% attendance requirement?
<b>Authorised absence</b>			
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances	No
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made	No
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances	No
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness	No
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment	No
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance	No

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations	No
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school	No
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>			
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school	No
<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)	No
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence	No
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed	No

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Counts towards 90% attendance requirement?</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend	N/A
<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	N/A
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school	N/A
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day	N/A

## Appendix 2: Study Leave

In taking decisions about study leave, the school notes these statements from the DfE guidance on school attendance (2022):

*Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete, it should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. If schools do decide to grant study leave, provision must still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.*

*As study leave is unsupervised it must be recorded as absence.*

Decisions about study leave will always be taken in the best educational interests of pupils at the school.

### Appendix 3: Child Performers

The school notes this statement from the 2020 DfE guidance on school attendance (a further update has not been included in the current guidance):

*The amendments made to regulation 7 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 on leave of absence do not affect the section that allows the parent of a child performer to seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. The amendments affect section 3 and 4 of regulation 7, which relate to leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday. Section 2 of Regulation 7 (which has not been amended) still enables a head teacher to grant leave of absence for a pupil to undertake employment during school hours for the purpose of taking part in a performance within the meaning of section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963. Legislation sets out that a local authority licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. Where the licence specifies the dates that a child is to be away from school to perform, then the head teacher should authorise those days. However, where the terms of the licence do not specify dates it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise leave of absence. However, where the terms of the licence do not specify dates it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise leave of absence. Head teachers should be sympathetic to requests that are supported by a licence, as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a child's education.*

### Appendix 4: Lesson Registers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance and punctuality to their lessons via the school's MIS system (other than PE who must submit paper registers), using the correct codes, and submitting this information at the start of each lesson.

Only the following codes should be used:

“/”	present
“N”	absent
“L”	late

Any pupil arriving after the start of lesson bell has sounded, whatever the reason, must be marked as late.