

## Wilby Church of England (VA) Primary School

### Policy on School Attendance and Punctuality

*Together we are inspired to learn within the family of God's love.  
We encourage one another to reach our full potential within a Christian  
atmosphere.  
John 13:34*



Wilby CE VA Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a fulltime education which maximises opportunities for each child to reach their true potential. This can only be achieved if a child attends school regularly and punctually. There is a strong statistical link between attendance and attainment; schools with high attendance levels tend to have higher levels of attainment.

#### **Aim**

- To improve the overall percentage attendance of pupils at school.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, staff and governors.

#### **Attendance**

Children are expected to attend school every morning and afternoon for 190 days per year (380 attendance marks) unless there is a good reason for their absence. The school expects all children to have at least a 96% attendance rate.

It is a legal requirement for staff to complete the school register at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. The class teacher will complete the register indicating if a child is present with a black line (/ or \) or if a child is absent with a red circle. The School Bursar or School Administration Assistant will enter attendance information on the SIMS system daily.

#### **Schools Procedure for Absence**

Our school operates a First Day Calling System. This means that parents should contact school **before 8.30am** on the first day of absence to inform us if their child is going to be absent from school. There is an answerphone service for leaving messages. The Bursar will ensure that the class teacher is informed and that the register is marked with the appropriate code. Alternatively, parents can email [bursar@wilby-ce.northants-ecl.gov.uk](mailto:bursar@wilby-ce.northants-ecl.gov.uk).

If by 9.30am, the school has not been notified of the reason why a child is absent, a phone call home will be made. If contact cannot be established and the child is absent for a second day, a letter will be sent home. If the child's absence extends to 10 days and we still have had no notification of absence, the Educational Inclusion and Partnership team (EIP) will be informed.

If a child is to be absent for one of the other authorised reasons listed below, parents should send a letter to the school in advance, giving the Head Teacher the appropriate details.

#### **Categories of Absence**

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised absence (where the school approves the absence)
- Unauthorised absence (where the school is unable to authorise the absence)

## **Authorised Absence**

Absence will be authorised for:

- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- One off, short absence to attend a special occasion such as the wedding of a direct family member or a family bereavement (at the head's discretion)
- Days of religious observance of the religious body to which the parent belongs
- Education off site e.g. transfer days to Secondary Schools
- Approved Educational Activities e.g. to attend a sports tournament, ballet exam

## **Unauthorised absence**

In some circumstances the school will not be able to authorise an absence:

- One-off short absence for pupils' / parents' / siblings' birthday, shopping trips, visits to theme parks or closure of a sibling's school
- Sickness absence will be recorded as unauthorised, if the school is not advised of the reason
- Absence that falls into one of the other categories listed above will be unauthorised, if it is taken without prior permission.

The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Head Teacher. If the Head Teacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

## **Holidays**

The government has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations from 2006. The regulations did allow Head teachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to five school days leave per year. Head Teachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances. 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. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

## **Fines to parents**

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013. The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Each parent must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations reduced the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

### **Special Leave for Exceptional Circumstances**

Parents are asked to complete an ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME NOTIFICATION FORM (See Appendix 1) explaining clearly the exceptional circumstances for requesting the need to have time away from school. These requests should be made at least two weeks in advance. Parents will receive a written response from the school explaining whether or not special leave has been granted.

If parents choose to take their children out of school during term time, the school will not be responsible for setting work missed or preparing additional work whilst the child is absent. A child's learning needs are based on on-going daily assessments.

The following factors will be taken into account when considering a parents' request:

- Amount of time requested
- Pupil's previous and current attendance record\*
- Proximity to National Testing
- Purpose of leave/circumstances of the request
- Previous requests for special leave.

\*If the pupil's attendance has been below 96% in the last 12 months from the date of the request, special leave will be unauthorised. This will be calculated on a rolling 12 month period, e.g. if special leave request was made on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019, the pupils attendance will be calculated from 15th January 2018 to 15th January 2019

### **Punctuality**

The school day begins at 8.50am and the registration period is from then until 9.00am. Children who arrive at school after 9am when the register has been taken will be classed as late. Such pupils must report to the school office upon arrival in order that their late attendance can be recorded in the register. If the child arrives after 9.30am, they will officially be marked as an unauthorised absence.

Pupils who are consistently late disrupt not only their own education but also that of the other children in the class. If a pupil is consistently late, a letter will be sent to their parents asking for their co-operation. Should this not be forthcoming, the parents will be invited in for a meeting with the Head teacher. If it continues, a referral will be made to the EIP.

### **Children not collected after school hours**

There are rare occasions when perhaps due to an emergency, parents are not able to collect their children promptly from school, or make arrangements for their collection at the end of the school day.

In accordance with Northamptonshire County Council policy, if the child is not collected, the school will make enquiries to find the parents using the emergency contact numbers provided by the parents. If after one hour it has not been possible to contact parents / carers then the local

Police will be informed of the situation. The Headteacher will also contact MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) to inform them of a possible problem.

### **Attendance Rate**

The school has been set a target for attendance of 96%. Therefore we encourage all children's attendance in our school to be above this.

The School Administration Assistant provides the Head teacher with a weekly report on attendance and punctuality. If a pattern appears, a letter will be sent home informing parents or they will be invited in for an attendance meeting.

At the end of each term (6 terms per year) the following actions are taken:

- If a child's attendance rate is below 90% and there are more than 2 periods of illness, a letter will be sent home. Within the letter, the parents will be asked to ensure that the child's attendance rate improves and that the school will continue to monitor this closely over the next term. (See Appendix 2)
- If the attendance rate slips below 85%, a letter will be sent home informing the parents of this and the school will no longer authorise any absence unless medical evidence is provided and that the school needs to see an immediate improvement in the child's attendance rate. (See Appendix 3)
- If the attendance rate fails to improve to over 90%, a final letter will be sent home, asking the parent in for a meeting to discuss the attendance rate and a contract will be written and signed by the school and the parent. (See Appendix 4) If the contract is not adhered to then the school will contact EIP and the parents may be prosecuted.
- An attendance monitoring form will be kept for each child whose attendance falls below 90%. (See Appendix 5)

### **Rewards**

To promote good attendance and to emphasise its importance, all children who have between 96% - 100% attendance during each half term will be receive a certificate.

### **Single Equality Duty**

At Wilby CE VA Primary School we are committed to ensure that there is equality for all and therefore we follow these points:

- All learners are of equal value.
- We recognise and respect difference
- We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.
- We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist
- We base our practices on sound evidence and information
- We formulate and publish objectives **at least every four years**, specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

A record of each child's record of attendance will be available on the child's individual report that is sent to parents on a yearly basis.

The Head Teacher will keep the Governors informed about attendance matters every half term in Full Governors meetings.

All staff will be expected to comply with the policy and any issues will be discussed at staff meetings.

This policy was developed through a period of consultation with the staff. It was reviewed and approved by the Governing Body on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2003, reviewed annually with the last review taking place in Spring 2019. The next review will take place in Spring 2020.