



WILSON'S SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Governors Approved: July 2021

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This policy accords with "School attendance: guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities" (Department for Education, August 2020).

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

A student's progress is severely hampered if he does not regularly attend school. To illustrate:

- 90% attendance is an average of one day out of school per fortnight over a school year.
- 90% attendance over 5 years at secondary school is half a school year missed.
- 80% attendance over 5 years at secondary school is the same as one whole school year missed.

Wilson's: Attendance Definitions	
98-100%	Expected
95-97%	Satisfactory
Below 95%, but above 90%	A cause for concern
Below 90%	A serious cause for concern.

It is clearly understood that there are exceptional circumstances when levels of attendance may fall below 98% or even 95% for reasons beyond the student and parents' control. These are very rare exceptions rather than the rule.

Furthermore, we acknowledge the link between school attendance and safeguarding, and the need to monitor attendance carefully in order to address poor or irregular attendance without delay (please refer to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy regarding Children Missing Education).

Getting Help

It is very important that parents speak with the relevant Head of Year or Director of Key Stage at the earliest opportunity if they have any worries at all about ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their son. However, whilst we will provide support and guidance, it is ultimately the parents' legal responsibility to ensure his regular attendance.

1. School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the DfE.
2. Annually the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance targets.
3. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals as part of the Performance Committee's remit
4. This policy contains the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

5. Any student who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (see Appendix 1). Only the Head or a member of staff acting on his behalf can authorise absence (normally a member of the Senior Leadership Team, or a

Director of Key Stage). If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

6. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.25 am. Boys arriving after the 8.25 am bell must register with the attendance secretary in the foyer before going to lessons. They will be marked late.

The registers will close at:

11.15 am in the morning

2.45 pm in the afternoon

Absence from School

7. Parents **must** telephone the school **by 8:00 am** on the first day of their son's absence and **every day thereafter** and follow directions on the answering service to record the absence. Parents must record (i) their son's name, (ii) his form and (iii) the reason for his absence. The attendance secretary will transfer this information each day to the registers.

Continuing Absence

8. Should a student be absent without contact from parents, this will be treated as a matter of concern for the child's welfare. Contact will be attempted by the school and external agencies will be involved where necessary.

Frequent Absence

9. It is the responsibility of the relevant Key Stage Director or Head of Year to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.
10. In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absence, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s, but at the same time may have to ask for the provision of medical evidence (e.g. a doctor's stamp in the student's planner / a photocopy of a prescription / a medical certificate) or indeed contact the GP's surgery ourselves. The assistance of external agencies may also be required, or legal measures might have to be taken. See Appendix 4 for further details.

School Refusal

11. The relevant Director of Key Stage oversees all cases of school refusal. With the support of parents, the relevant Head of Year, the Deputy Head with responsibility for attendance, and outside agencies where appropriate, a programme of re-admittance will be set up for the student. This could involve a range of strategies depending on the needs of the individual
 - Reduced timetable
 - Home school support
 - Mentoring
 - Off-site tuition

The school recognises that "all schools (including academies) must agree with the relevant local authority, the regular interval that the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more" (DfE guidance, 2020).

A Welcome Back

12. It is important that on return from an extended period of *unavoidable* absence the student is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other students. The relevant Key Stage Director or Head of Year will oversee this process. The school will not provide work for boys whose absence is unauthorised.

Planned Absence Requests

13. Planned absence requests are not generally granted and almost never to those whose attendance is below 98%. Therefore, requests for all forms of absence (including medical appointments) must be made in advance and in writing. 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 the SLT will then make a decision 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. He must be satisfied with that the absence is necessary “based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave” (DfE guidance, 2020). Any absence taken without authorisation, without suitable notice, or taken after the school has refused permission, will be treated as unauthorised. A pattern of such absence, or a one off absence of more than one day, will trigger further intervention.

Absence Notes

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

Promoting Attendance

15. The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

Holidays in Term Time

16. Holidays in term time will not be authorised. Parents of students who take holiday in term time may be subject to a fixed penalty notice (see Appendix 2).

Sixth Form

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

The Registration System

17. The School will use SIMS.net for keeping the school attendance records.
18. The following national codes will be used by the attendance secretary to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING	Counts towards 90% attendance requirement?
/	Present (AM)	Present	YES
\	Present (PM)	Present	YES
B	Off-site educational activity (NOT dual	Approved Educational	YES

	registration)	Activity (absent for statistical purposes)	
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence	NO
D	Dual registered (at another educational establishment)	Approved Educational Activity	YES
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	Authorised absence	NO
F	Extended family holiday (agreed) <i>Note above point about 2013 DfE guidance.</i>	Authorised absence	NO
G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher	Unauthorised absence	NO
H	Holiday authorised by the school <i>Note point 16 above.</i>	Authorised absence	NO
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments)	Authorised absence	NO
J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment	Approved Educational Activity	YES, if approved in advance
L	Late (before register closed)	Present	YES
M	Medical or dental appointments	Authorised absence	NO
N	Reason for absence not yet provided	Unauthorised absence	NO
O	Absent from school without authorisation (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence	NO
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity	YES, if approved in advance
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	NO
S	Study leave	Authorised absence	NO
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Authorised absence	NO
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised absence	NO
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	YES
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	YES
X	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age children)	Not counted in possible attendances	N/A
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances	N/A
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances	N/A
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Not counted in possible attendances	N/A

Note that authorised absence is still counted as absence for the purposes of calculating student attendance figures.

Registration Procedures for Teachers

It is the responsibility of Form Tutors to take the session register each morning and afternoon, except on a Friday afternoon, when the Period 5 lesson mark is used as the pm session mark and in which case the responsibility falls on the subject teacher.

NB: Under no circumstances should students or prefects be allowed to mark the register.

Student Registration

Registration is marked by the Form Tutor using SIMS.net or via electronic registration in the Sixth Form.

/ or \	Present
N	Absent
L	Late

These are the only codes that should be used by Tutors. The attendance secretary will enter other codes when the appropriate procedures have been followed by students or parents.

Every student must have a mark before closing. There should be no missing marks. Students arriving after registration must register with the attendance secretary in the foyer.

Absence Notes

Absence notes handed in by students at registration, should be given to the attendance secretary in the foyer. For sixth form, all notes should go directly to the Sixth Form Administrator.

Class Registration

All classes (other than PE who must submit paper registers) must be registered using SIMS.net.

Codes: “ / “ present
 “N” absent
 “L” late

NB: Any boy arriving after the start of lesson bell has rung is to be considered late and must be marked as such.

Lateness – behaviour management

Punctuality is important and expected. Lateness is not acceptable. The school's procedures for dealing with lateness are outlined in both the Code of Conduct (Years 7-11) and the Sixth Form Agreement.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1

The Law

This policy takes into account all relevant Government guidance.

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

[a] to his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] to any special educational needs (in the case of a child who is in the area of a local authority in England) he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

The legal requirements are found in:

“The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013” to “The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021”

Categorisation of Absence

Any student who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements

- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

APPENDIX 2

Study Leave

In taking decisions about Study Leave, the school notes this statement from the DfE guidance on school attendance (2020):

Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete, and study leave should only ever be granted to pupils in year 11. If schools do decide to grant study leave, provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

All pupils are different and have different requirements and preferences when preparing for examinations. Some schools do seek alternatives to study leave as they recognise that some pupils do not have the skills, or are not inclined, to make the best use of unsupervised and unstructured revision time. However, many schools also recognise that study leave is a chance for pupils to develop their independent study which will help them when they move to post-16 provision, where a self-study approach is commonly used.

Y11 pupils granted study leave should be marked on the attendance register as authorised absence using code S. No other attendance code is suitable for the purpose of study leave. Y11 pupils who are 16 years old are of compulsory school age (up to the last Friday in June) and must be marked on the attendance register accordingly.

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 DfE guidance on school attendance (2020):

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

Legal action to enforce school attendance

Poor attendance at Wilson's is rare. However, where it does occur, we are not only keen, but also obliged to engage with students and their parents in order to bring about improvement.

Ultimately this may necessitate exercising our statutory powers as defined by law. The school will never take such action lightly.

Parents commit an offence if their son fails to attend the school regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot, or has not, given permission). Such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Local councils and schools can use various legal powers if a child is missing school without a good reason:

- a Parenting Order
- an Education Supervision Order
- a School Attendance Order
- a fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice')

The local council can issue a fine of £60, which rises to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Prosecution may follow after 28 days, with the possibility of a fine (up to £2,500), community order or jail sentence up to 3 months.

When could a fine be issued?

- A student's attendance is persistently below 90%
- A student is absent for a reason which is not regarded by the school as legitimate.
- A student is absent without permission.
- A student is absent after permission to be absent has been refused.
- Student absence is not explained.
- A student takes a holiday in term time
- Any other circumstance deemed as inappropriate by the Head.

Is a warning given?

When attendance falls below 90%, contact will be made by the school and this constitutes the warning.

The school has the discretion to issue a fine without warning in relation to any holiday taken in term time.

Further information is available from the relevant local authority.

APPENDIX 5

On determining term dates, the school notes this statement from the DfE guidance on school attendance (2020):

Schools and local authorities can agree to set different term dates for different year groups – e.g. for ‘staggered starts’ or ‘induction days’. Code # can be used to record the year group(s) that is not due to attend. This is only acceptable where the school ensures that those pupils not attending on that day are still offered a full education over the school year.