



ASPIRATIONS



Wykham Park Academy Attendance Policy

Date of last review	April 2022	Review Period	2 years
Date of next review	March 2024	Owner	Academy
Type of policy	Attendance	Board approval	Regional

Introduction

Wykham Park Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

1. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (C, I, M, B, P, J, R), unauthorised (O, G) or as an approved educational activity (V, W) (attendance out of school). These codes are available on www.gov.uk as approved by the Government.
2. Only the Principal or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

1. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 08:45am. The registers will remain open until the end of Period 1.
2. pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation, e.g. school transport was delayed (L).
3. The afternoon registration will be at 12:30pm
The registers will close at 1:00pm
4. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.
5. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written/electronic confirmation.

Absence from School

First Day Absence

- Parent/carer to call/email school by 8.30am every day that the child is absent.

Telephone number 01295 251451.

Email attendance@wykhampark-aspirations.org

- If no call is received, a member of staff will attempt to make contact (please ensure that the office has up to date contact numbers).
- If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will remain unauthorised.

Third Day Absence/Continuing Absence

- Parents/carers are expected to contact school daily during periods of absence. The attendance office will continue to make ongoing contact as required.
- If no contact can be made, an e-mail or letter will be sent requesting contact.
- Wykham Park Academy may request proof of ill health (e.g. Doctor's certificate, or an appointment card/electronic notification of appointment or prescription).

Pupil Missing

- Any pupil who is absent without an explanation or contact after 10 consecutive school days will be referred to Thames Valley Police in order to conduct a welfare check.
- Pupils missing from school for 20 consecutive days will be passed to the County Tracking Officer to be removed from the school roll. This is in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the child will lose their school place.

Absence Notes

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the Attendance College Co-ordinator/Senior Leadership Team Member responsible for Attendance and Welfare Manager to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s. The Attendance Officer will liaise with the County Attendance Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring, parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

Penalty Notices and Legal Action

Students' attendance will be monitored regularly and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a students' attendance is causing concern.

Data will be shared with staff as needed so that appropriate interventions can be made.

The academy will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussions with students by the mentor or attendance co-ordinator for the college
- Attendance report cards
- Time limited part time timetables
- Nurture
- Punctuality report cards
- Parental Contract meetings
- Referral to other external agencies
- Referral to Local Authority attendance team

The Law

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 needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or by education 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 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child, if he/she is a registered student at a school and is compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the County Attendance Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;

- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases will be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

A parental contract (Anti social behaviour act 2003) is a voluntary agreement between the school and the parent. It can also be extended to include the child and other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties and leading to improved attendance. The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils. A return to school discussion will take place between the Mentor and pupil.

Promoting Attendance

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.

The Home/School agreement can be used in this way.

Leave of Absence

The Principal will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Principal prior to the leave of absence period in question.

The Principal will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave

of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

Attendance Awards

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance:

- *Weekly celebration of attendance & punctuality in assembly*
- *Certificates given to pupils that have achieved 100% attendance termly with prize draw*
- *Improved attendance certificates*
- *Inter-college weekly competition for highest attendance displayed in assembly*
- *Rewards during Aspirations week in summer term 2 for those with over 96% attendance (in 2022 Covid absences will be ignored)*

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our school's target for attendance is:

96%

Register and Admission Roll keeping

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

- [1] Unauthorised Absence;
- [2] Authorised Absence;
- [3] Approved Educational Activity.

1. Unauthorised Absence

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

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations for an absence include:

- The student's birthday
- A family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniform
- Having a hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes
- "Couldn't get them out of bed"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough for school
- Family holidays

2. Authorised Absence

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

Illness – parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the school to authorise absence where appropriate. This might be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/dental appointments – parents are asked to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day where possible. Where this is not possible, students must attend for part of the day. Parents must show the appointment card to school.

Other authorised circumstances (see leave of absence on page 5)

Traveller absence – it is expected that Traveller children, in common with all other children, are to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

The academy will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the child must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases the student's place will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

The academy can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

The academy will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school.
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered students at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any student and appropriate statutory action may be undertaken.

Religious observance – the academy recognises the multi-faith nature of British society and acknowledges that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. Such absence will be authorised up to a maximum of one school day.

3. Approved Educational Activity

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

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

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (pupil registration) (England) regulations 2013, students can be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside of the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after the school has tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age
- In custody for more than four months
- 20 days continuous absence and the school has tried (unsuccessfully) to locate the student
- Death of a student

Roles and responsibilities

The academy believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, the Trust's regional board, parents, students and the school's wider community.

The Regional Board will:

- Regularly review the academy's attendance policy and ensure that the required resources are in place to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor the academy's attendance and punctuality data through Regional Board meetings and monitoring visits etc.

The senior leadership team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents
- Ensure that there is a clear and well communicated whole school approach to attendance
- Monitor the impact of the Attendance Policy and review it regularly to ensure that it is fit for purpose
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader who will take on the strategic lead on attendance and be given sufficient time and resources to enact the policy
- Ensure that school attendance data is shared with appropriate bodies in a timely manner
- Ensure that there are robust systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including any who are educated off site.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Use the data analysis to implement appropriate actions to support young people to improve their attendance
- Ensure that there is a multiagency approach to improving attendance by supporting students and their families

Parents will be asked to:

- Take a positive interest in their child's education
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations and dreams
- Contact the school immediately if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences and make appointments for the dentist, doctors, etc outside of school hours whenever possible
- Contact their child's mentor for help as soon as there seems to be an issue
- Inform the academy of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Encourage healthy routines at home for example bedtimes, preparing their school bag and uniform the night before etc
- Avoid keeping their child off school to go shopping, to help out at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time and only in exceptional circumstances send a written leave request to the principal