



The Winston Churchill School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Review by:	SLT / Attendance and Welfare Manager
Adopted by the Full Governing Body:	June 2018
Next review:	June 2019

Aim

The Winston Churchill School aims to actively pursue the goal of regular attendance for every student. The Governing Body and staff of The Winston Churchill School are committed in partnership with parents¹, students and the Local Authority (LA) to maintain the highest levels of attendance at the school. We firmly believe that regular attendance at school is fundamental to raising standards, educational achievement and social inclusion.

Objectives

- To ensure that parents understand the importance of punctuality and full attendance at school,
- To encourage students to be aware of the importance of their own attendance and punctuality,
- To respond promptly to student and/or parent concerns that may affect attendance,
- To provide an establishment that is welcoming and rewarding for all students of all abilities,
- To ensure that every child has full access to a curriculum that is relevant to his or her needs thus encouraging attendance,
- To ensure that equality of opportunity and the development, performance and attainment of students is high on our agenda.

General Statement

As a school, we actively encourage parents to ensure that their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Research has shown all students benefit from regular attendance at school and it is key to their social, emotional and educational progress and attainment. As part of our commitment to maximising attendance we take into account the statutory duties highlighted in the following documents:

The Education Act 1996
The Education (pupils' attendance records) Regulations 1991
The Education (pupil registration) Regulations 1995 (amended 2013)
Social Inclusion: Pupil Support DfEE circ. 10/99
Penalty Notices Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 Section 23

¹ The word 'parent' represents an adult with legal responsibility or day-to-day care for the student attending The Winston Churchill School.

Principles and Responsibilities

Students

Students have the responsibility to:

- Attend school regularly and punctually,
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day,
- Promptly inform their Form Tutor if there are any reasons that may prevent attendance,
- Deliver a letter from parents explaining all absences on the day they return to school.

Parents

Parents have the responsibility to:

- Ensure their child's regular attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities,
- Ensure that their child/ren arrive on time prepared for the school day,
- Ensure that they contact the school on the first day of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school,
- Provide a letter explaining the reason and date/s of absence on the day their child returns to school,
- Contact the school promptly whenever a problem occurs that may prevent their child attending school,
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details,
- Notify the school immediately of any home circumstances that may affect the behaviour and learning of their child,
- Support the school when disciplinary sanctions are required in relation to attendance and punctuality,
- Attend meetings in school when required.

School

The school through its teaching and administrative staff has the responsibility to:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere,
- Provide a safe learning environment,
- Provide a response to any student or parent concerns, within 48 hours where possible
- Keep regular and accurate records of morning and afternoon attendance and punctuality for all students,
- Monitor the attendance and punctuality of individual students,
- On the first day of absence, if no reason is provided from the parent/carer by 10:00am the school will endeavour to contact them that day by automated text, telephone or email messages.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain reasons from parents, although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence,
- Encourage good attendance, with rewards
- Provide support through the pastoral system for students with difficulties,
- Liaise with the Education Welfare Service where necessary to support students, parents and the school to achieve its aims,
- Meet the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child – by ensuring that whenever possible, students are consulted in all the decisions that relate to them.

Students Leaving During the School Day

- Students are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school,
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school hours,
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, whether the student is expected to return and at what time and whether the student will be collected or will make their own way to the appointment,
- Students must sign out at the student entrance on leaving the school and sign back in on their return and their planner will note this accordingly,
- Where a student is being collected from the school, parents are requested to report to the student entrance before the student is allowed to leave the site,

Students Educated Off Site

- When students are educated off the school premises, e.g. College, Work Placement, on communication with the Provider regarding attendance the registers are marked accordingly.

Leave of Absence

- It is school policy not to authorise any absences due to holiday taken in term time. Some exceptional circumstances may be considered when appropriate,
- The Education Regulations 2013 which became law on 01 September 2013 state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- If a family holiday in term time is unavoidable a Leave of Absence Request Form must be completed prior to the holiday
- The school holiday dates, external exam dates and INSET days are published a year in advance,
- Parents should book their family holidays during the school holidays, no parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right

Punctuality and Lateness

- First bell occurs at 08:20am and registration takes place at 08:25am. Students who arrive after 08:25am will be recorded as late to school,
- Students who arrive late are required to sign in at the student entrance if they are unable to register with their tutor. Students who arrive at all other times must also register their time of arrival at the student entrance with a reason.
- Morning registers close at 09:00am. Students who arrive after the register has closed are recorded as an unauthorised absence and could be liable to prosecution by the Education Welfare Service,
- Afternoon registration is taken during period 4
- Persistent lateness will be dealt with through disciplinary sanctions.

Absence Due To Illness or Medical Reasons

- Absence will only be authorised in cases of illness or other situations that have been discussed with and approved by the school,
- However in the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested before the absence is authorised.

Truancy

- Internal truancy will be dealt with in line with the school behaviour policy,
- External truancy, will involve the Attendance and Welfare Manager,
- If external truancy persists despite involvement from the Attendance and Welfare Manager the student may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer for further action which may include prosecution for failing to ensure regular school attendance,

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices

- The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days,
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid with 28 days, the LA is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.
- Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued
 - A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officer
 - When a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.
 - The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are at least 10 unauthorised sessions during the preceding half term. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.
- With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued. If a warning is issued then a pupil will be given 15 school days to show improvement before the Penalty Notice is issued
- Penalty Notices relating to Exclusions
 - Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without a justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice.
 - Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform The Winston Churchill School as soon as possible. A student will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the student will be leaving the school and starting the next,
- The address of the new school,
- A new home address if appropriate.

The student's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the LA Tracking Officer and Education Welfare.

Signed: Chair of Committee..... Date:.....