

# The Willows School Academy Trust



## Attendance Policy

Reviewed: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

## **Contents:**

1. Aims
2. Legislation and guidance
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Recording attendance
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence
6. Strategies for promoting attendance
7. Attendance monitoring
8. Monitoring arrangements
9. Links with other policies
  - Appendix I: attendance codes
  - Appendix II: Letter templates
  - Appendix III: Leave of absence request form
  - Appendix IV: Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance

### **1.Aims:**

This document has been written to help understand the legalities of pupil attendance, the Local Authority's structure and support in attendance matters, and to provide some examples of good practice.

The Governors and staff of The Willows School Academy Trust are committed to promoting excellent attendance to ensure that pupils receive a full-time education that maximises their potential. For children to gain the greatest academic and social benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and on time, every day the Academy is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Academy staff will work closely with pupils, their families and multi-agencies to ensure that each pupil attends regularly and punctually.

This policy has been agreed by the Governors and staff of The Willows School Academy Trust and it sets out the principals, procedures and practice the school will undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of good attendance. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

#### **1.1 Objectives:**

- To promote good attendance and ensure that all children attend as near full-time as possible, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development.
- To discharge the school's duty to safeguard its pupils to be best of its ability
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff, governors and multi-agency key workers understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence through regular tracking and monitoring.
- To reduce levels of persistent and severe absence, by building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- To reward good and excellent attendance and provide incentives for children where attendance needs to improve.

- To maintain effective partnerships with The Participation Team, Education Welfare Services and other appropriate support services and agencies to ensure pupils with poor attendance are supported.

## **2.Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the 'working together to improve school attendance updated for August 2024' from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures, children missing in education, supporting pupils with medical conditions at school, suspensions and exclusions, alternative provision and safeguarding. 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
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.
- This document is informed by new KCSIE 2025 guidance and ties in with The Willows School Academy Trust Behaviour and Safeguarding policies.
- This document is informed by the new DfE guidance on working together to improve school attendance updated for August 2024.

## **3.Roles and responsibilities**

It is the expectation at The Willows that all pupils will achieve at least 90% attendance (above the national average attendance percentage for maintained special schools) – whilst striving to achieve 95% attendance or more. Promoting and rewarding good attendance will be at the heart of our school attendance improvement strategies, alongside regular tracking and monitoring and consistent communication between home and school. We will work closely with pupils and families to ensure that barriers to attending school are removed as early as possible. We will also seek external support where necessary for students with persistent or severe absence.

### **3.1 The Governing board**

The Governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **3.2 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **3.3 The designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance:**

The designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school and offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Being the named 'Attendance Champion' for the school.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis and ensuring attendance data is shared and discussed with SLT and DSL teams
- Devising specific strategies to address poor attendance identified through data and tracking
- Leading on family liaison and intervention for poor attendance ensuring regular communication between home and school and fostering positive relationships with pupils and families.
- Lead liaison between attendance and safeguarding teams.
- Arranging meetings, home visits and external support meetings with families.
- Closely monitor those pupils with persistent or severe absence and deliver targeted intervention to pupils and families.
- Overseeing all attendance contracts in place for pupils and families
- Carrying out home visits when appropriate.
- Working closely with Local Authorities where appropriate to deliver intervention for attendance.
- Completing CME (Child Missing Education) form after any prolonged absence from school and refer to the local authority.
- Ensuring that all pupils and parents/carers understand that good attendance leads to the best chance of attaining and building a sound foundation for future success.
- Working alongside the Attendance Officer to ensure that teachers are completing registers and also to complete any relevant register checks and class checks.

### **3.4 The Attendance Officer:**

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of attendance around school and leading on rewards and incentives for attendance.
- Ensure staff discharge their responsibility for keeping registers up to date and on time and reporting attendance issues to key staff.
- Monitoring, tracking and analysing attendance data and identify areas for improvement.
- Monitoring attendance for all pupils and groups – with particular focus on persistent and severely absent pupils – and provide regular reports to the designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance and the Headteacher.
- Running weekly attendance reports and decide on an appropriate action and intervention, using the attendance tracking system.
- Making regular contact with parents/carers for both positive reinforcement and concerns relating to attendance.
- Ensuring accurate and up to date records of parent/carer emergency contact details are kept.
- Advising the designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance and the Headteacher on when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Preparing paperwork to send to Local Authorities for fixed penalty notices
- Contacting parents/carers on the first day of pupil's absence to obtain the reason.
- Communicating with parents/carers to chase reasons for non-attendance and arrange meetings relating to attendance.
- Supporting the Family Support Worker in the review process of attendance contracts

- Working with the Participation Team and other relevant Local Authority teams to deliver targeted intervention for students with attendance concerns.

### **3.5 Class teachers:**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Being a positive role model for pupils, by being punctual and prepared.
- Promoting good attendance with pupils with regular discussion
- Giving positive praise for pupils being in school.
- Keeping an accurate and up-to-date register on time.
- Communicating with the Attendance Officer where children are absent.

### **3.6 Parents/Carers:**

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child arrives at school every day on time.
- Calling the school no later than 8:30am to report an absence on the first day their child is absent from school and update the same way each day of absence.
- Communicating with school any upcoming medical appointments taking place within school hours. Parents must provide evidence of medical appointments.
- Ensuring that the Academy has the correct and most current contact details for parents/carers in case of an emergency.
- Communicating with the school any concerns they may have that could be affecting their child's attendance to school.
- Attending any meetings that the school has arranged with regards to attendance.
- Avoiding taking their child out of school during term time, except in special circumstances with written permission from the Headteacher.
- Working in partnership with school on attendance and attendance issues.
- Understanding that they have the greatest influence and responsibility with regards to attendance; taking a lead role in promoting the importance of good attendance to their child.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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.

We 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 circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9:00 a.m. on each school day. The register in the morning will remain open for 40 minutes and 15 minutes in the afternoon.

Only the Headteacher or designated member(s) of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view, and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as O (Unauthorised absent). Absence notes received from parents/carers will be kept for the remainder of the academic year; or longer if there are concerns that require further investigation or legal action.

#### **4.2 First day contact:**

Parents are expected to notify school on the first day of absence if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. If school does not receive notification it will telephone on the first day of absence, to try to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may need to contact external support services.

Parents/ carers need to be aware of the following:

- When contacting school regarding your child's absence, details should be given of the nature of the illness and the predicted time of return.
- Infectious or contagious diseases must be notified to school immediately.
- When the pupil returns to school, if notification of the reason for absence has not already been given to the school by telephone, they should bring a written note signed by a parent stating the reason for the absence.
- Parents should give the school advanced written notice if their child is to be absent from school to attend an appointment (for example at the hospital, clinic, dentist or with other professionals).
- The school should also be informed, in advance, of absence resulting from participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.
- If confirmation of the reason for absence, either by letter or telephone, has not been received on the pupil's return to school, the absence will remain as unauthorised and will be followed up by a member of staff.

#### **4.3 Continuing Absence Procedures:**

Following the first day of absence, we will call the parent/carer 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 an education welfare officer or other relevant external services. In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a home visit may be made by our Family Support Worker. Any child who has a pattern of erratic attendance (less than 90%), or persistent lateness after registers close will receive a letter about their attendance and further investigations will be made by the Attendance Officer and Family Support Worker.

#### **4.4 Persistent and severe absence procedures:**

The Willows School Academy Trust has an effective tracking and monitoring system which identifies pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (more than 10% absence), and severe absence (more than 50%). We will work with you to ensure barriers to attending school are removed as early and effectively as possible. Interventions can include phone calls and meetings with the Attendance Officer and Family Support Worker, attendance contracts with agreed targets, bespoke strategies that can be used at home and in school and home visits. In cases where there appear to be issues requiring outside intervention to support the family and the child, a referral may be made for external agency support – such as the Participation Team or other relevant Education Welfare Services. The attendance team and safeguarding team work closely together to ensure close monitoring of children absent from education, in particular where children are already known to local authority children's social care and will work alongside external services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.

#### **4.5 Children Missing in Education:**

Any child who is absent without explanation for 10 consecutive school days, and where there is limited or no communication between school and the family, the school will initiate a CME (Child Missing in Education) report to the local authority as this is a safeguarding concern. The school will work alongside external services to ensure, first and foremost, the whereabouts and safety of the child, and secondly will work with all stakeholders to reintegrate the child back into their education provision. If the absence continues, without explanation or communication from the family, this could jeopardise the child's school placement.

#### **4.6 Reluctant attenders/school refusal:**

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. If their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with school staff at the earliest opportunity; any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between school, the parents / carers and the child. We recognise that some of our pupils may suffer from emotionally based school avoidance and anxiety around coming to school. We will put additional support in place for pupils in school – together and in agreement with families and pupils.

Families can also support by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Ensuring your child is ready for transport
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with the Academy
- Being positive about school (even if their own experience was less than positive)
- Setting alarm clock 5 minutes earlier
- Setting a target time to leave the house at the same time each morning

### **5. Authorised and Unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

An absence will be classified as authorised if the school is given advanced notice of:

- Attendance of a medical appointment at the hospital, clinic, dentist etc.

- Attendance of an appointment with other professional's e.g. Educational Psychologist, Therapist, Psychiatrist etc.
- Observance of a religious festival.
- The school is notified by telephone or letter of absence through illness.

Circumstances the school consider constitute an acceptable absence:

- Illness/injury
- Medical appointments which must be made in term time
- Appointments with other professionals e.g. Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Therapist.
- Religious observance
- Bereavement
- Leave of absence which has been approved by the Headteacher
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

### **Education off site:**

Leave of absence will be authorised for pupils to attend certain educational activities or to attend other school settings. Activities include:

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity
- Attending another school at which the pupil is registered (dual registration)
- Attending a provision arranged by the local authority, e.g. alternative provision or as part of an educational, health and care plan.
- Participating in an approved sporting activity
- Attending an educational visit or trip arranged by school
- Attending work experience

### **Leave of absence:**

In accordance with statutory attendance guidance for schools, leave of absence may be granted for the following reasons, and only where leave has been formally requested:

- **A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable:** where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the child normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.
- **Exceptional circumstances:** Leave will only be considered where this has been requested in advance by the parent the child normally lives with. All applications will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. School will consider pupils' attendance percentage when granting leave requests. DFE guidance for schools states that the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence will also not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

Where unauthorised holiday has been taken, this will be referred to the Participation Team or Education Welfare Service who may issue a fixed penalty notice, for each parent.

Where leave of absence has been taken and authorised by the Headteacher and the pupil fails to return on the agreed date, the school reserves the right to remove the child from the school roll.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time.
- Excessive illness without medical evidence
- Children acting as carers

## **5.2 Legal Sanctions**

The Willows School Academy Trust 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 £80 within 21 days or £160 paid after 21 days but within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

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. Strategies for promoting attendance**

The Willows School Academy Trust takes great pride and places a huge importance on promoting good attendance. We have prominent attendance displays around school, weekly assemblies celebrating and rewarding pupils with good and improving attendance. Pupils receive attendance certificates, stickers and prizes and are motivated by class attendance competitions. Pupils are also encouraged to participate in the weekly Headteacher reward, which celebrates good and improving behaviour and attendance. Letters are sent home celebrating good and improving attendance and pupils are celebrated in termly attendance newsletters. School regularly report home on pupil's attendance to raise awareness and ensure that discussion around the importance of good attendance is being held at home and at school. As well as highlighting attendance on half termly reports, we send newsletters and hold coffee morning sessions to discuss and promote the value of good attendance to parents/carers.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

At The Willows we closely track and monitor attendance using our attendance tracker. This is designed to ensure that all pupils' attendance is tracked on a weekly basis and patterns of absence can be easily identified. This system allows us to put bespoke and early intervention in for all our pupils who may be facing barriers to attending school. Regular communication with families from the Attendance Officer and Family Support Worker is key to our intervention; building strong and positive relationships with families and pupils and working together on individualised action plans ensures that pupils are able to access as much of their education provision as possible.

## **7.1 Analysing attendance and using data to improve attendance**

The Willows School Academy Trust analyses attendance data on a half-termly basis and compares school level absence data to the national average. This data is shared with the Headteacher and governing board. Our school attendance data can also be accessed by the DFE via our MIS.

Regular data analysis allows us to:

- identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

We also use data to:

- Provide regular attendance reports to school staff and leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## **7.2 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use the attendance tracker and attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with families and pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school and work on bespoke strategies to remove any barriers
- Work with families to provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by Debbie Downie (Family Support Worker). At every review, the policy will be approved by the Headteacher and full governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behavior policy

## Appendix I: attendance codes

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

<b>Attending the school</b>	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
<b>Absent – Leave of absence</b>	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes</b>	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
<b>Administrative Codes</b>	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

## Appendix II: Letter Templates: Letter 1

Dear Parent of:

### **Pupil Attendance**

School attendance is monitored carefully at The Willows to ensure that children are attending regularly. Currently .... attendance stands at ..... which is well below that of government and school expectations of **95%**.

For your child to get the best out of their education it is vital that they are in school every day to enable good learning and progress. Regular attendance will ensure that your child will have the greatest opportunity to achieve their potential and will best prepare them for the next phase of their educational development.

Of course, from time to time it will be necessary to keep your child at home due to sickness. When this is the case, please contact the school as soon as you have made the decision not send your child in.

Wherever possible, we would ask you to please try and arrange appointments with a doctor, dentist, optician or hospital out of school time.

**For further information, please refer to our Attendance Matters leaflet.**

We ask for your support in ensuring your child attends regularly and on time. If you feel we can be of any help, please contact the Attendance Officer Mrs. Kasha in the office or speak to our Family Liaison Worker Mrs. Downie.

Yours sincerely

|

Kasha Trzaska  
Attendance Officer

## Letter 2

Dear Parent of:

### **Pupil Attendance**

School attendance is monitored carefully at The Willows to ensure that children are attending regularly. .....attendance continues to be a concern and currently stands at ..... which is well below that of government and school expectations of **95%**.

For your child to get the best out of their education it is vital that they are in school every day to enable good learning and progress. Regular attendance will ensure that your child will have the greatest opportunity to achieve their potential and will best prepare them for the next phase of their educational development.

Of course, from time to time it will be necessary to keep your child at home due to sickness. When this is the case, please contact the school as soon as you have made the decision not send your child in.

Wherever possible, we would ask you to please try and arrange appointments with a doctor, dentist, optician or hospital out of school time.

**For further information, please refer to our Attendance Matters leaflet.**

We ask for your support in ensuring your child attends regularly and on time. If you feel we can be of any help, please contact the Attendance Officer Mrs. Kasha in the office or speak to our Family Liaison Worker Mrs. Downie.

Yours sincerely

|

Kasha Trzaska  
Attendance Officer

### Letter 3

Dear Parent of:

#### **Pupil Attendance**

As you are aware, we monitor attendance carefully at The Willows to ensure that your child is getting the most out of his placement. Good attendance is vital for ..... educational and personal development. .... attendance remains a concern and currently stands at .....%, which is well below that of government and school expectations of **95%** and means that continues to be classed as **persistently/severely absent**.

As a school, we are committed to supporting you to improve ..... attendance and we would like to reassure you that we will continue to work with you in order to remove barriers that are preventing ..... from coming into school. However, despite our continuous efforts, there is no significant improvement in your child's attendance. We will work with you to ensure all necessary help is provided in order to improve ..... school attendance.

A formal meeting with the Family Liaison Officer and Attendance Officer has now been arranged for you.

**You are required to choose one of the following dates to attend the meeting:**

We must also remind you that it is your legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school every day and on time and to contact the school first thing in morning on any absent days.

Yours Sincerely

|

Mrs. D. Downie  
Family Liaison Officer/SLT

## Communication Issues Letter

Dear Parent/Carer of:

We have attempted to contact you using the emergency contact information you have provided and on numerous occasions there has been no response. Therefore, [.....](#) transport will be suspended until a steady contact between the school and yourself has been established.

It is vital that the school retains **up-to-date** emergency contact details for all children. It is a legal requirement for schools to hold at least two telephone numbers at which the parent can be contacted in the event of an emergency. It is important that all first priority emergency contact mobiles are fully charged and switched on during the school day so we can contact you in the event of an emergency. Please inform the school if your mobile number changes.

Children can become ill quite quickly or may have an injury that requires school to contact you. First aid is available in school for minor accidents, but in cases of real emergency, it is of the utmost importance we are able to contact you. Hospitals are unwilling to administer treatment if a parent/carer is not present. It is also very important that we know who your child's family doctor is.

**Please contact the school as a matter of urgency.**

Yours Sincerely

|

Mr. M. Shaw  
Head Teacher

## Persistent/Severe Absence Letter

Dear Parent of:

### **Pupil Attendance**

As you are aware, we monitor attendance carefully at The Willows to ensure that your child is getting the most out of his placement. Good attendance is vital for ..... educational and personal development. Currently ..... attendance stands at ..... which is well below that of government and school expectations of **95%** and means that is classed as **Persistently/Severely Absent**.

As a school, we are committed to supporting you to improve ..... attendance and we would like to reassure you that we will continue to work with you in order to remove barriers that are preventing ..... from coming into school. We will work with you to ensure all necessary help is provided in order to improve ..... school attendance.

You are therefore requested to make an urgent contact with the school to arrange a meeting with Family Liaison Mrs. Downie.

We would like to kindly remind you that it is your responsibility as a parent/carer to ensure your child is at school every day and on time.

Kind Regards

|

Mr. M. Shaw  
Head Teacher

## **Unauthorised Holiday Letter**

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Unauthorised term time holiday**

We are writing to you as you have made the decision to take your child out of school during term time for the purposes of a holiday.

We care enormously about the welfare and education of your children and pride ourselves on our dedication to ensuring that they are in school as often as possible. It is for this reason that we request all holidays be booked during the school holidays. Upon choosing The Willows School for your child's placement, you signed our Home School Agreement, stating that holidays will not be taken during the school term. Our leave of absence request also outlines that exceptional leave may be granted for up to ten days (only if students have 100% attendance) and up to five days (only if students have between 95-100% attendance).

Good attendance is vital for developing emotional resilience, social and communication skills and establishing routine. Your child's attendance currently stands at x%, which is above/ below the average whole school attendance and is above/ below the government and school expectations of **95%**. We must remind you that it is your legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school every day and on time. We strongly advise that you encourage your child to attend every day until the end of this academic year.

Further information can be found in our Attendance Matters leaflet, attached to this letter and on our website. We want to work with you to ensure your child attends regularly and on time. If you have any questions, please contact a member of our attendance team and we will be happy to help.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. Kasha  
Attendance Officer

## **Suspected Holiday Letter**

Dear Parent/Carer of:

### **Suspected term time leave**

I am writing about ..... absence from school from ..... to ......

From information received from other sources we believe that this was due to term time leave. You have not followed the correct procedure for requesting leave of absence during term time.

We would be grateful if you could confirm the reason for the absence within 7 days of the date of this letter so this period can be recorded appropriately on the attendance register. However, if the absence was not due to exceptional circumstances but due to illness, please provide medical information to support this.

If we do not hear from you within the next 7 days, ..... absence will be recorded as 'G' denoting an unauthorised term time leave.

If unauthorised absences are recorded, a Penalty Notice Fine can be issued by the Local Authority to each parent/carer in respect of each child who is absent from school. Failure to pay will result in legal proceedings being initiated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Please note if 3 or more term time leave Penalty Notices have been issued over a 3 year period then prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may be considered as an alternative to a Penalty Notice fine being issued. Where a parent takes a child out of school during term time for an extended period (20 days or more), not authorised by the school, prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may also be considered.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. Kasha Trzaska  
Attendance Officer

## Award Letter



### **Congratulations .....! Your attendance is EXCELLENT!**

Dear Parent/Carer,

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate your child on continuing to shine with excellent attendance.

..... attendance has remained steady at 100% throughout Autumn 1 Half Term, which means she/he has not missed a day of school and is getting the best out of her education and development.

We appreciate your support in ensuring that your child attends school on a regular basis, and we hope that you will continue to encourage him to maintain his excellent attendance

Yours Sincerely

Malcolm Shaw  
Head Teacher

|  
Kasha Trzaska  
Attendance Officer

Deborah Downie  
Attendance Officer  
Family Support Worker

## Appendix III: Leave of Absence request form



### The Willows School Academy Trust

#### Learning Achieving Succeeding

A Specialist Primary School for Children  
with Social, Emotional and Behaviour  
Difficulties



Dear Parents/Carers

The Department for Education allows a Head Teacher the discretion to authorise a leave of absence only in 'exceptional circumstances'. If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised. Your request for leave of absence must be made in advance before any arrangements are confirmed or money is committed. If your leave of absence is granted, please ensure you contact school to discuss how we can minimise the disruption to your child's routine and development. Failure to make a request for leave of absence in advance will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised. Similarly, if you decide to take your child out of school where permission was not granted, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the school will notify the local authority, who may issue a penalty notice.

All leave of absence requests must be completed on the attached form - letters will not be accepted. This should be returned to the school at least 4 weeks before the start of your intended leave.

The Head Teacher will consider the following when processing your request:

- Reasons given for the exceptional leave
- The time of the year/term
- Whether your child will miss any preparation for tests/examinations
- Whether your child will miss any tests/examinations
- Your child's attendance/punctuality record

### Application for Leave of Absence from School

As a Parent/Carer, you should fill in this form if you wish to take your child out of school during term time for any reason other than sickness. Parents/Carers are requested to familiarise themselves with school policy and are reminded that leave of absence will only be considered in **exceptional circumstances**.

Once completed, please return this form to the main school office no less than three weeks before the first date of absence.

The conditions under which term-time absence may be granted are contained in Reg.8 of The Education (Pupils Registration) Regulation 2013.

**Parents/carers should not make the assumption requested absence will be granted. Permission will not be granted retrospectively.**

I request that \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name) Class \_\_\_\_\_ be granted leave

of absence from The Willows School Academy Trust from \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ inclusive.

Total school days missed: \_\_\_\_\_

The reason for this absence is \_\_\_\_\_

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Please continue overleaf if necessary

During this time I will ensure I will contact the school and keep the school updated on my child's wellbeing.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Carer) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**To be completed by the school**

**Leave granted/not granted** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher)

**Failure to return on the agreed date**

When granting leave of absence, a return date must be agreed with the school and adhered to. Absence after the agreed return date will not be authorised and may result in referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer.

## **Appendix IV: Summary table of responsibilities**

- **attached**