

The Willows School Academy Trust



Attendance Policy

Reviewed: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027

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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.

The school recognises that attendance is both an educational priority and an important protective factor. As an SEMH special school whose pupils have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), we understand that barriers to attendance may be complex. We will maintain high expectations while responding fairly, sensitively and individually to pupils' needs.

Every pupil is expected to attend every session for the full duration unless the absence is unavoidable or properly authorised. The school's whole-school ambition is 95% or above, but decisions and support will always take account of individual circumstances, disability, health and SEND.

The school will promote the educational, social, therapeutic and safeguarding benefits of attendance through assemblies, displays, newsletters, conversations and curriculum opportunities. Praise and incentives will be used sensitively and without discrimination. They will recognise improvement, effort, re-engagement and class or individual progress. Pupils will not be penalised or made to feel responsible for absence caused by illness, disability, SEND, transport failure or another circumstance outside their control. Rewards will not create an entitlement to term-time leave.

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 the 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 Attendance Support 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 July 2026' 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
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Children Missing Education: statutory guidance
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- 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 2026 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 July 2026.
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

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
- Reviewing and challenging attendance data, including data for key cohorts, pupils with SEND, long-term health needs and pupils with social workers
- Ensuring the attendance policy is published, accessible and reviewed at least annually
- 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:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented consistently and fairly
- Ensuring attendance and safeguarding systems work together
- Reporting attendance and the impact of strategies to governors
- Supporting the Senior Attendance Champion and attendance staff
- Uauthorising leave of absence where appropriate
- Considering or authorising legal interventions in accordance with the National Framework and the local authority Code of Conduct.

3.3 The Attendance Champion:

The Attendance Champion is Kasha Trzaska, Designated Safeguarding and Attendance Lead. Contact: 020 8841 7176 or ktrzaska.312@lgflmail.org.

The Attendance Champion responsible for attendance is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school and offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Maintaining strategic oversight of attendance data, processes and interventions
- Ensuring regular liaison between attendance, safeguarding, SEND and senior leadership team
- Devising specific strategies to address poor attendance identified through data and tracking
- Leading on 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:

- Completing first-day calling and daily follow-up of unexplained absence;
- Monitoring registers and ensure absence codes are accurate and updated promptly;
- Analysing individual, cohort and whole-school attendance data at least weekly;
- Contacting families, record actions and coordinate appropriate support;
- Ensuring, where reasonably possible, that at least two emergency contact numbers are held for each pupil;
- Liaising with class teams, transport, the SENCO, DSL, social workers and local authority services;
- Preparing documentation for attendance meetings, contracts and legal intervention; and
- Promoting attendance and recognise improvement sensitively and without discrimination.

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.
- 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.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending and arriving on time wherever they are able to do so
- Sharing worries or barriers with a trusted adult
- Participating in support and reintegration planning in a way appropriate to their age, understanding and communication needs

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.

Arrangement	Time/process
School open to pupils	8:50am
Morning register taken	9:00am
Morning register closes	9:30am
School day ends	3:00pm
Afternoon register	Taken at the start of the afternoon session and kept open for no longer than 30 minutes.

A pupil arriving after the register is taken but before it closes will be recorded using code L. A pupil arriving after the register closes will normally be recorded using code U unless another code more accurately describes the reason for absence.

Registers will be taken at the same time for all registered pupils, including pupils on temporary part-time timetables. The school will record whether each pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend because of unavoidable circumstances.

4.2 Amendments and retention

Any amendment will show the original entry, amended entry, reason, date and the name and position of the person making it. Attendance-register entries will be retained for six years from the date of entry. Other attendance records will be retained in line with the school's records-management schedule.

4.3 Unexplained absence and code N

Where the reason for absence has not yet been established, code N will be used temporarily. It will be replaced with the correct code as soon as the reason is established and no later than five working days after the session. If no satisfactory reason is established within that period, code O will normally be used.

5.Absence procedures and safeguarding

5.1 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:

- The parent/carers should contact school by 8:30am and explain the reason for absence and expected return date.
- If no reason is received, the Attendance Lead/Officer will contact parents and all appropriate emergency contacts on the first day.
- The school will check information held by class staff, transport and relevant professionals, where appropriate.
- If the child has a social worker and/or youth offending team worker, they will be informed of unexplained absence.
- Where contact cannot be made or information causes concern, the matter will be discussed with the DSL immediately. A welfare visit, local authority contact, referral to children's social care or police contact may be required according to risk.
- Unexplained continuing absence will be followed up each day and all actions recorded.

5.2 Safeguarding response

Repeated, prolonged or unexplained absence may be a vital warning sign of neglect, abuse, child sexual or criminal exploitation, county lines, mental-health concerns, substance misuse, FGM, forced marriage, honour- or faith-based abuse, trafficking or other harm. The school will not wait for a fixed number of days before taking safeguarding action.

Staff must report concerns promptly to the DSL/deputy DSL and record them on CPOMS.

The DSL will consider the child's known risks, vulnerabilities, SEND, communication needs, family context and professional involvement.

Where the child is known to children's social care, absence will inform safeguarding and welfare decisions and relevant professionals will be contacted.

Where there is concern that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, a referral will be made immediately to local authority children's social care and, where appropriate, the police.

Attendance action will be coordinated with child protection, child in need, looked-after child, Family Help or other relevant plans.

Home visits may be undertaken earlier than the third day where risk indicates. They will be carried out in accordance with the school's lone-working and safeguarding procedures, normally by two members of staff where risk assessment requires this. A home visit does not replace an immediate referral where a child may be at risk of significant harm.

Following lengthy or unavoidable absence, the school will plan a supportive return, rebuild trusted relationships and address learning, therapeutic and emotional needs. The pupil's views will be sought using communication approaches appropriate to them.

5.3 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:

- weekly individual-level analysis to identify patterns and emerging concerns;
- regular meetings with pupils and families, with interpreters or communication support where required;
- a written, individualised action plan with clear actions, owners and review dates;
- access to wider services and formal support with the local authority where necessary;
- close coordination with the DSL, SENCO, social worker and other professionals;
- priority multi-agency planning for severely absent pupils; and
- regular evaluation of whether actions are improving attendance and wellbeing.

5.4 Children Missing in Education:

A child missing education is a child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise. A pupil on the school roll who is absent is not automatically CME; however, unexplained or prolonged absence may place them at risk of becoming CME and is a safeguarding concern. Should a child be at risk of becoming CME:

- The school will contact the local authority CME service promptly whenever a pupil's whereabouts or access to suitable education is uncertain, in accordance with local procedures.
- Safeguarding action and CME enquiries will not be delayed until a fixed number of days has elapsed.
- The school will make reasonable enquiries jointly with the local authority, share relevant information lawfully and maintain a clear record of enquiries.
- The school will make statutory returns to the local authority when a pupil is added to or deleted from the admission register at standard and non-standard transition points.
- A pupil will be deleted from roll only where a statutory ground under the 2024 Regulations is met. Poor attendance alone is not a lawful reason for deletion.
- Where a pupil has been continuously absent for 20 school days or more and their location is unknown, deletion will be considered only if the relevant statutory conditions are met and the school and local authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries without success.

5.5 Emotionally Based School Avoidance

The school will use a relational, trauma-informed approach to emotionally based school avoidance. Support may include a trusted-adult plan, predictable arrival routine, sensory or regulation support, adapted transitions, safe spaces, therapeutic input, transport liaison and a carefully reviewed reintegration plan. Staff will avoid describing anxiety-related absence simply as refusal or defiance.

5.5 Pupils unable to attend because of health needs

Where a pupil is likely to miss 15 consecutive school days or the cumulative total because of illness will reach 15 days in the school year, the school will make the required sickness return to the local authority and work with the authority regarding suitable education. The school will maintain contact and support reintegration.

6. Authorised and Unauthorised 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.

Only the Headteacher, or a member of staff acting with delegated authority, may grant leave of absence. Parents cannot authorise absence. Each request will be considered individually, fairly and in light of the pupil's circumstances. Previous or current attendance percentage does not create an entitlement to leave.

6.1 Illness and medical appointments

A parent's notification that their child is too ill to attend will normally be accepted. The school will not routinely or automatically require medical evidence. Reasonable evidence may be requested only where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about authenticity, or where it is needed to understand prolonged or recurring health needs, plan support, make reasonable adjustments or record the correct code. The school will not be rigid about the form of evidence.

Routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, pupils should miss only the time necessary and attend before or after the appointment where appropriate.

6.2 Religious observance and other authorised leave

Absence will be authorised for a day set apart exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Other statutory leave categories will be considered and recorded using the appropriate national attendance code.

6.3 Exceptional circumstances

Leave for exceptional circumstances must be requested in advance by the parent with whom the pupil normally lives. The Headteacher will consider the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background. A holiday or other absence for leisure and recreation is not normally an exceptional circumstance. Leave will not be granted retrospectively.

6.4 Education off site

Approved off-site activity, dual registration, local-authority arranged provision, approved sporting activity, educational visits and work experience will be recorded using the correct national codes. The school remains responsible for safeguarding and monitoring attendance at alternative or off-site provision and will follow up non-attendance promptly.

6.5 Types of unauthorised absence

- absence without a satisfactory explanation;
- holiday or leisure leave not granted by the school;
- unnecessary absence for shopping, birthdays, childcare or similar reasons;
- truancy or leaving school without permission;
- late arrival after the register closes where no authorised reason applies; and
- absence where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the stated reason and the available information does not support an authorised code.

7. SEND, SEMH, health needs and attendance

Pupils with SEND, disabilities, long-term health conditions or SEMH needs have the same right to education and the same attendance ambition as other pupils, but may require additional, different or more intensive support. The school will:

- understand the pupil's individual needs and listen to the pupil and family;
- work closely with the SENCO, DSL, class team, therapists, health professionals and local authority;
- consider adjustments to practices and policies and make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 where required;
- ensure communication support is available so the pupil can express their views;
- review whether EHCP provision is being delivered and whether additional or different support is required;
- work with the local authority to review the EHCP where attendance barriers indicate that provision may need amendment;
- consider a time-limited phased return where appropriate;
- avoid sanctions, rewards or communications that discriminate against or shame pupils because of disability, illness or unavoidable absence; and
- monitor attendance and the impact of support regularly, including at governing-board level.

8. Attendance data and 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.

8.1 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 is also shared with the DfE on a daily basis 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

8.2 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

8.3 Support and Attendance Contracts

The school will work with pupils and families to understand and remove barriers. Where voluntary support is unsuccessful or not engaged with, the school will consider formalising support with the local authority. Legal intervention is a last resort except where support is not appropriate, for example an unauthorised holiday.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement intended to improve attendance. It is not a punishment. It will identify barriers, support, parental commitments, school or local-authority actions, review arrangements and the consequences of non-engagement. The pupil's and parent's views will be considered.

9. National Framework for Penalty Notices

Penalty notices must be issued in accordance with the local authority Code of Conduct. Within school, only the Headteacher or a deputy/assistant head authorised by the Headteacher may issue a notice. The local authority or police may also issue a notice where authorised by law.

Framework element	Requirement
National threshold	10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The period may span terms or school years.
Decision	Meeting the threshold does not make a notice automatic. The authorised officer must consider support, suitability, Equality Act duties and whether a notice is the best available tool.
Notice to Improve	Usually issued where support is appropriate but has not worked or has not been engaged with. The improvement period is normally 3–6 weeks and follows the local Code of Conduct.
First notice	£160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
Second notice	£160 if paid within 28 days, with no reduced rate, where issued to the same parent for the same pupil within three years.
Third offence	A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within the three-year period. Alternative action, often prosecution, must be considered.
Non-payment	After 28 days the local authority must decide whether to prosecute for the original offence or withdraw the notice.

10. Monitoring and links with other policies

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Senior Attendance Champion and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, local procedures or the school's circumstances change. It will be approved by the Headteacher and Full Governing Board and published on the school website

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Children Missing Education procedure
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy and SEN Information Report;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Data Protection and Records Management policies;
- Equality Policy and Accessibility Plan;
- Educational Visits Policy.

Appendix I: attendance codes

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

Attending the school	
/ \	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
Absent – Leave of absence	
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
Absent – other authorised reasons	
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
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
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
Absent – unauthorised absence	
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
Administrative Codes	
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

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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

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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/carers 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

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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/Spring/Summer Term, which means she 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

Appendix III: Leave of Absence request form

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.

Completing this form does not mean leave will be granted. Leave for a holiday or other leisure/recreational purpose is not normally an exceptional circumstance. Permission cannot 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 _____

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: _____

To be completed by the school

Leave granted/not granted _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Headteacher)

Appendix IV: Summary table of responsibilities

Who	Core responsibility
Pupils	Attend and arrive on time; share barriers with a trusted adult; participate in support planning.
Parents/carers	Secure regular attendance; report absence; keep contacts updated; request leave in advance; engage with support.
School	Maintain a culture of attendance; accurate registers; same-day follow-up; safeguarding action; early and individualised support.
Senior Attendance Champion	Strategic leadership, data oversight, safeguarding/SEND liaison, intervention and accountability.
Governing board	Ensure compliance, challenge data, monitor cohorts and hold leaders to account.
Local authority	Provide attendance support, facilitate multi-agency work, receive statutory returns and use legal intervention where appropriate.
Children's social care and partners	Share information and coordinate support and protection where absence indicates need or risk.

Signed:

Malcolm Shaw
Headteacher

September 2026

Balevir Grant
Chair of Governors

September 2026