



# WINTERBOURNE JUNIOR GIRLS' SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy Academic Year 2023/2024

### **AIMS:**

This policy provides the framework within which all staff, parents, pupils, carers and external agencies can contribute to the development and maintenance of a learning environment where high attendance and excellent punctuality is the "norm".

Good attendance at Winterbourne Junior Girls' School is not just beneficial it is essential therefore, pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. The school will establish a system of incentives and rewards, which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and punctuality, and will challenge the conduct of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet the objectives Winterbourne Junior Girls' School will make sure that there is an effective system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support. The school attendance policy will be made available and accessible to the whole school community.

### **To promote our attendance policy the school aims to:**

- Support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- Enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- Make parents and carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Do everything in their power to meet Government and Local Authority targets.

**School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life and research clearly demonstrates links between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment.**

190 days of education	180 days of education	171 days of education	161 days of education	152 days of education	143 days of education
<b>100%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Good</b> Best chance of success, gets your child off to a flying start!		<b>Worrying</b> Less chance of success. Makes it harder to make progress. Attendance Improvement Officer involvement.		<b>Serious Concern</b> This will seriously affect your child's learning and progress. Potential Court Action	

**90% attendance equates to 1 day off every two weeks.**

**5 Minutes late per day equates to over 3 days absence over an academic year.**

**15 minutes late per day is the equivalent to over two weeks absence from school**

As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

### **Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). 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](#)

It also refers to:

[School census guidance](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

### **Target**

The overall school attendance target is **96%** which is above the national average. Progress on target related information and statistics will be made available on our school newsletters.

### **Expectations**

**We expect that all pupils will:**

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Follow the schools Ethos every day

### **Registers, Punctuality and Lateness**

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that child's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. **It is therefore paramount that all pupils arrive at school every day on time.**

Our school opens at 8.45am ready for the learning to begin at 9.05am. Children attending the Breakfast Club may arrive from 7.30am.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil

- Pupils should enter the school via the playground. Children should only enter via the schools main hall doors (entrance via the car park) if they are attending the Breakfast Club
- The morning register will be taken at 9.05am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The afternoon register will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be taken very seriously by the school and parents may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the concerns
- Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their annual report and will be passed on to future schools
- Learning ends between 3.25pm and 3.40pm (depending on year group), we expect children to be collected promptly by a parent or a delegated adult

### **Pupil Leaving During the School Day**

During school hours, the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where every pupil is during the school day.

- Pupils 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 time.
- Parents are requested to inform the office of the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out by the office staff on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return

### **Whole School Policy for School Attendance – Aims**

- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data and maximising attendance rates as one of a school's key tasks
- To actively pursue the goal of regular attendance, both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole
- Individual absences will be carefully investigated and parents left in no doubt that unjustified absences will not be tolerated
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- All attendance related communication between school based staff will be recorded in a clear/concise manner and parents will be notified of attendance and punctuality issues pertaining to their child
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions (where necessary)

- To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

### **The Partnership between Parents and School**

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive full-time education. Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend school. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.

Where the word parent is used in relation to a pupil at school this also includes any person who is not their parent but who has parental responsibility for them or who cares for them.

Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn. They need to see themselves as partners with school in the education of their children. This means instilling in their children a respect for education – and for those who deliver it – and ensuring that they support pupils with their homework and items needed for school e.g. PE Kit, packed lunch. Parents should also impress upon their children the need to observe the school's Code of Conduct and reinforce this through discipline in the home.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. This includes keeping children off school for minor reasons. Providing a note explaining an absence may not be sufficient if the school determines that the reason given is not unavoidable.

### **Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances/Penalty Notices**

- It is our School's policy not to allow any holiday or extended leave during term time. Department for Education regulations means that Head teachers can no longer authorise Leave of Absence
- The exception is at the Head teacher's discretion and only under exceptional circumstances
- All requests for leave must be put in writing to the school's Head teacher

The Education Welfare Officer works with the Head teacher in overseeing any such requests from parents. Each request will be considered individually taking into account: the age(s) of the student(s), the time of year, overall attendance percentage(s) and the student(s) progress. If the leave of absence involves any travel arrangement, these must NOT be booked until permission is granted.

### **If the School does not agree to the request then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.**

Unauthorised holiday taken during term time will result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer where a Penalty Notice will impose warning or Penalty Notice fine, as current legislation places the responsibility on the parent(s) to ensure satisfactory school attendance for their child/children.

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.

The Education Authority of which payment should be made within 21 days will issue the Penalty Notice fine imposed of £60 per parent, per child. If not paid within 21 days payment will rise to £120 per parent, per child if paid within a 28-day period.

### **Religious Observance**

The school will authorise two separate day's absence due to religious observance but the day must be:

- Exclusively set apart for religious observance
- Set apart by the parents' religious body (not the parents)

**If you wish to request an 'exceptional leave of absence due to special circumstances', you may be invited to a meeting with the Head teacher to discuss the matter further.**

### **Strategies**

The following strategies will be used by the school to address attendance and punctuality issues:

- First Day Calling
- Breakfast club
- Assemblies
- Maintaining clear and effective policies and procedures
- Making the school's attendance policy available to parents, staff and pupils in accessible formats.
- Attendance Improvement Plan to support parents/carers
- Regular monitoring of pupil attendance and punctuality

Some children need encouragement to attend regularly. Any problems are best sorted out between the school, the parent and the child. It is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from school.

### **Informing the School of an Absence**

Winterbourne Junior Girls' School expects parents to contact the school on the first day of absence and each day after that. The exact reason needs to be clearly stated. In the case of a long-term illness, the school will negotiate contact terms with the parent.

Parents may:

- Inform the office in person
- Telephone the school
- Write, explaining the reason for absence
- Leave a voice message

All absences will be investigated. The school office will contact parents on the first day of absence if a message has not been received.

**When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner:**

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.30 am, the school will endeavour to contact them that day
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact with the parents, the school will telephone any further contacts given on the data collection sheet. If the absence persists, a referral may be made to the EWS
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Education Welfare Service may result in further action

### **Changing schools**

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform the Head teacher as soon as possible in writing. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if it is known
- Confirmation of the pupil starting an alternative setting

**The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible.**

In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

### **School Procedures**

A child's absence is monitored initially by the class teacher and followed up by the administrator with responsibility for attendance as well as the Head teacher and Education Welfare Officer.

Reasons for absence – when known should be recorded by the attendance officer.

Letters regarding reasons for absence should be sent to the school office in the register.

Verbal and telephoned messages received by the office will be written down and recorded on the electronic registration system daily.

The school secretary will telephone parents who have not given reasons for absence and follow up any unexplained absences.

The EWO will meet regularly with the Head teacher and the School Attendance officer to discuss attendance. Any requests that the Head teacher makes will be followed up by the EWO and may result in a home visit or interview with the parents at school. If after this there is, no improvement in attendance a decision to prosecute could be made.

## **Registration**

Registers will be taken at 9.05am and again for the afternoon session at 1.15pm.

The back door to the school is closed at 9am. Children and parents entering the building after this time will need to use the entry phone system in the main entrance. They must report to the school office where a reason for lateness will be recorded. The names of children arriving after 9.05am and before 9.30am will be recorded.

When a child is arriving at school consistently late, it is recognised that the cause of this is most often the adult caring for that child. The school will contact the parents to seek an improvement in the situation. An interview with the EWO will be arranged if there is no improvement. The EWO together with the Head teacher, initiate regular late checks. Parents of children arriving late will be interviewed by the EWO and a record of the discussion made.

## **Educational Welfare Service**

The Head teacher will contact parents of pupils who are in danger of falling below 95% once every half term. A referral will be made to our Education Welfare Officer when a student's attendance falls below 94% or concerns are raised. The Education Welfare Officer will arrange either a telephone meeting or a face to face meeting at school or possibly carry out a home visit to ascertain reasons for irregular attendance or poor punctuality. The Education Welfare Officer will discuss what support is available to ensure regular attendance at school.

Following the meeting with the Education Welfare Officer the expectation is for improved attendance to follow. Failure to do so could result in referring to outside agency for support i.e. Social Care and/or the issuing of a Penalty Notice and consideration of legal proceedings, which could result in a prosecution and a fine.

### **Under Section 7 of the Education Act (1996), parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their child (ren) attends the School on a regular and full-time basis.**

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the School as either authorised or unauthorised. The School must record the reason for any half-day absence. Unauthorised absence such as truancy will lead to sanctions being taken against students or in exceptional cases, extended periods of unauthorised absence may lead to legal action being taken against parents.

Under normal circumstances, the only reason a student should miss any lessons is if they are too ill to attend. This is an example of an authorised absence, i.e., students have missed a morning or afternoon session for a valid reason. Unauthorised absences are those, which the School does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This includes keeping students away from school unnecessarily, truancy and absences, which the School considers to have not been properly explained.

## **Pupil Records**

At Winterbourne Junior Girls' School, we recognise that by efficiently managing our records, we will be able to comply with our legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the school.

The pupil record is seen as the core record charting an individual pupil's progress through the Education System and the pupil record will accompany the pupil to every school they attend and will contain information that is accurate, objective and easy to access.

At Winterbourne Junior Girls' School, we use a consistent file cover for all our pupil records which is the principal record containing all the information about an individual child.

Pupils have a right of access to their educational record and so do their parents under the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005. Under the Data Protection Act 1998, a pupil or their nominated representative has a right to see information held about them.

When a year 6 pupil transfers in July to secondary school, Winterbourne Junior Girls' School will check whether that child arrived in their designated school in the third week of September (no later than 20<sup>th</sup> September) and amend the school's Excel spreadsheet accordingly.

The school, which the pupil attended until statutory school leaving age, is responsible for retaining the pupil record until the pupil reaches the age of 25 years.

### **Child Missing in Education**

A Child Missing in Education is defined by the DfE as 'a child of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise' (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who has been out of any educational provision for a substantial period (usually 4 weeks or more). In Croydon, referrals for CME are accepted after 10 working school days of reasonable checks being carried out by the educational provider the Education Welfare Officer and their Designated Safeguarding Lead including Safeguarding home visits being carried out.

- After all checks have been carried out an online CME form is completed and sent to the Local Authority to the CME team. If the school knows that the child will not be returning and has written evidence this information is also attached. A registration sheet will also be sent to show attendance.
- The school then has to wait for an email confirmation from the CME team with advice of when that child can be taken off roll.

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to promote attendance and to publish attendance figures. Parents will receive a copy of their child's attendance with her end of year report.

Parents have a legal duty to make sure their child attends school. The school has a duty to make sure that pupils feel safe at school and find school interesting and worthwhile. The school is committed to working with parents to ensure these requirements and duties are met.

**REVIEW DATE: July 2024**