



'Attendance is everyone's business' (Department of Education)

The DfE have issued new guidance to all schools and local authorities which come in to effect from 19th August 2024. For this reason, it is important to share with you some of those changes.

OUR VISION

Schools that have good attendance, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. Good attendance starts with close and productive relationships with parents and pupils. At South Wilford we treat all pupils and parents with dignity and kindness and look to create an ethos of togetherness, value, inclusivity and mutual respect. This in turn creates a sense of belonging where children and their families can feel safe and secure. This is the foundation of good attendance.

Granting leave of absence

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances.

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution, where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.
- Exceptional circumstances: All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. It must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

Persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil has missed 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year) School will work with the family to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance. That will always start with a respectful conversation.

Severe attendance is where a pupil has missed 50% or more of school. These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. As a school we will work with all partners to identify specific support.



Penalty Notices – issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution and are intended to prevent the need for court action.

- Penalty Notice Fines are to be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.
- First Offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. This is reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- Second Offence (within 3 years) – £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
- Third Offence and any further offences – The case is to be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. A Magistrates fine can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Other changes to be aware of

1. From September, schools will have to consider a fine if a pupil misses 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence. For example, four sessions in term time plus six instances of arriving late. The period of 10 weeks can also span different terms or school years.
2. Schools will have to give their local authority the name and address of unwell pupils who they believe will miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days.
3. Schools should be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with the necessary additional support. However, it is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly.

If you or the school are worried about your child's attendance...



We will talk to you.....

Where a pattern of absence is emerging, school will sensitively and respectfully, have conversations with the family to provide support and guidance.



Share with us...

If you have concerns about attendance or how your child is feeling, do make contact with the class teacher for initial support and guidance.



Offer tailored support...

If necessary, together we may discuss tailored support for your child or you as a family through the class teachers, SENDCO, ELSAs, Educational Welfare Officer or other professionals.