



Attendance Policy

Review cycle: Annual

Last Review Date: Sept 2026

Next Review Date: Sept 2027

Staff responsible: DSL/Safeguarding Team

Committee responsible: Pastoral Committee

(This policy applies to the whole School including EYFS)



Aims

Willington Prep aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances.

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
- to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil at Willington is able to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the school;
- to prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the school, reduce absence and set out the school's approach to the management of absence / non-attendance;
- to recognise the linkages between attendance / absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
- to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection.

This policy applies to the whole school (including the Early Years Foundation Stage - EYFS).

This policy is designed to address the specific statutory obligations on the school to record attendance and absence. This policy has been written using the Statutory Framework 2024, [Working together to improve school attendance](#).

Regulatory framework

This policy has been prepared to meet Willington Prep's responsibilities under:

Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

Independent School Standards guidance, (DfE, April 2026)

Department for Education (DfE)

EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (DfE, September 2026)

Education and Skills Act 2008

Children Act 1989

Childcare Act 2006

Sponsorship Duties (UKVI, July 2023)

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Equality Act 2010

Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, July 2026)

Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, applies from 19 August 2024)

Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance (DfE, September 2023)

Guidance for parents on school attendance (Office of the Children's Commissioner, September 2023)

'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance (NHS, April 2024)

Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2026)

School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures (DfE, May 2020)

Children missing education (DfE, September 2025)

Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (DfE, August 2017)

Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, February 2024)



Mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, November 2018)

Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (DfE, February 2023)

Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE, February 2023)

Remote education guidance (DfE, updated August 2024)

SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, January 2015)

The following School policies, procedures and resource materials are relevant to this policy:

Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures

Missing child policy and procedures

SEND policy

Disability policy

Behaviour policy

Parent Contract

This policy is published on Willington School's website and is available in hard copy on request. A copy of the policy is available for inspection from during the School day. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Definitions and interpretation

Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:

- references to attendance include references to attendance for all or part of the timetabled school day.
- references to the Proprietor are references to the Board of Governors.

References to a Parent means:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a pupil; and
- any person who has day to day responsibility for a pupil (i.e. lives with and looks after a pupil).

References to a pupil includes anyone who is receiving an education at the school except a person who is 19 or over for whom further education is being provided, or a person for whom part-time education suitable for people over compulsory school age is being provided

- SAC means the School's attendance champion (Deputy Head) - Mrs Ellie Henery

Responsibility statement and allocation of tasks

The Governing Board has overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy.

The Governing Board recognises that improving attendance is a school leadership issue and has appointed designated senior leaders to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in School, referred to in this policy as the Senior Attendance Champion (SAC), Deputy Head - Mrs Ellie Henery.

The importance of good attendance

Willington Prep recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. This is an integral part of Willington's ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance it recognises:

- the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of Willington's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life;
- the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions and / or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils;
- the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and parents;



- that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies; and
- children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

School responsibilities

Willington Prep acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the school community. Willington Prep will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and parents. Where there are challenges to attendance, Willington will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.

Willington Prep will respond to non-attendance and / or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and Willington's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.

Willington Prep has systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues. The school uses the School Management System of iSams for this.

Staff responsibilities

The Governing Board has appointed senior members of staff of Willington's leadership team as SAC (Deputy Head), Mrs Ellie Henery to have overall responsibility for championing and improving and monitoring attendance in school.

The SAC's responsibilities are:

- to set a clear vision for improving attendance in school;
- to establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure the systems are followed by all staff;
- to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes;
- to have oversight of and analyse attendance data; and
- to communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and parents.

The School Offices' responsibilities for attendance

The School Office staff have day to day responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. They should:

- have a formal routine for registers being taken accurately each morning and afternoon;
- seek explanations of absences required from parents on their return to school;
- make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and follow up with parents to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to Willington Prep;
- look out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and inform the SAC of any specific concerns;
- deal with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly;
- discuss non-attendance and / or lateness with parents and emphasise the importance of punctuality and attendance.



All staff

Willington Prep ensures that all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents about it. Willington Prep provides appropriate training and professional development for staff consistent with their roles and responsibilities.

School arrangements

Willington Prep will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence. These registers must be kept electronically.

Monitoring attendance

Willington Prep will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them. Such analysis may include:

- monitoring and analysing half-termly attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families;
- using this analysis to provide attendance reports to class teachers, if required, to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead);
- conducting thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends;
- if needed, benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;
- monitoring the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented; and
- providing data and reports to the Governors to support its work upon request.

Pupil responsibilities

School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. Willington Prep therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance.

Pupils should be aware that:

- they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each school day;
- they are expected to arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons;
- they should not leave a lesson or the school site;
- they should engage with the school's arrangements for recording and managing attendance as set out in this policy;
- any unexplained absence will be followed up;

This may take the form of:

- offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance;
- communication with parents;
- reporting to other agencies such as children's social care; and

If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending school or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff, although Willington encourages them to speak to their form teacher in the first instance. Pupils are entitled to expect this information to be managed sensitively.



Additional needs

Willington Prep recognises some pupils may find it harder than others to attend school, and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Willington Prep will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with pupils without a disability, in relation to school attendance. It will also work with parents and, where appropriate, with the local authority to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities e.g. ensuring the provision outlined in a pupils education, health and care plan is accessed. Suitable strategies will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance.

Where barriers are outside of Willington's control, the school will work with parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

Willington Prep will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that **the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness** or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of **illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days**. Medical evidence will only be requested where the school feels it is genuinely necessary.

Parent responsibilities

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education. This means pupils must attend every day that Willington is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from school.

Willington Prep will help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development and provide clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.

Parents are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the parent contract and failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with Willington about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the school unreasonably.

Training

Willington Prep ensures that regular guidance and training on attendance is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles. As a minimum this will include all staff understanding:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances; and
- Willington's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.

Dedicated attendance training is provided to any member of staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. This should include:

- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers;
- the process for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it;
- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data; and



- any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

Willington Prep maintains written records of all staff training.

Information sharing

Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education. Willington Prep, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to a pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familiar harms). Where appropriate the school will attend regular targeting support meetings.

Willington Prep is legally required to share information from the registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

- New pupil and deletion returns;
- Attendance returns
- Sickness returns

The law allows local authority officers access to the attendance and admission registers of all types of schools to carry out their functions under the Education Acts to support joint working between schools and local authorities. These officers are also permitted to take digital or physical extracts of Willington's registers. Willington Prep must provide specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State. Where appropriate, Willington is expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences.

Record keeping and confidentiality

All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with Willington Prep's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. Willington Prep's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. Willington Prep has published privacy notices on its website which explain how the school will use personal data.

School arrangements

Managing attendance

Willington Prep monitors, records and shares data about pupil attendance and as part of its duty to safeguard and protect pupils and promote attendance. It accurately completes admission and attendance registers as required by law. The admission and attendance registers must be kept electronically and retained by Willington for the relevant time period as stated by law.

Willington Prep expects all pupils to be present at school for the whole of the school day, usually from registration 8.20am to 3.30pm for Pre Prep and 4.05pm for Prep, but this period may be extended, for example for out of school clubs, sports fixtures or school trips.

The role of parents

Willington Prep expects all Parents to:

- make any application for an authorised leave of absence at the earliest opportunity;
- notify Willington of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible in accordance with this policy and when doing so, give an accurate explanation for this; and



- cooperate with the school to explore possible barriers to attendance and to improve it where attendance has been raised as an issue.
- ensure their child attends Willington Prep by 8.20am for Prep and 8.20-8.20am for Pre Prep for morning registration;

Registration and attendance checks

Willington Prep operates two registration sessions each day for both Pre Prep and Prep.

- Pre Prep (Nursery - Year 2)
 - Registration Session 1: 08.20 - 08.50 (30 minutes)
 - Registration Session 2: 13.20 - 13.50 (30 minutes)
- Prep (Years 3 - 6)
 - Registration Session 1: 08.20 - 08.50 (30 minutes)
 - Registration Session 2: 14.15 -14.45 (30 minutes)

Registers open at the start of each registration session and remain open for the full 30-minute session. Children arriving after the start of the registration session will be marked as late in accordance with the school's attendance procedures.

Some class teachers may do their own registers at the beginning of each lesson in order to identify and follow-up on absences from lessons that might occur after morning or afternoon registration. Willington uses iSams for E-Registration.

Reporting absence

If a pupil is to be absent from school for any reason, the parent should fill in the absence request form ASAP or phone/email the school office to let them know. Where a pupil is ill, Willington should be notified of the nature of the illness.

Managing absence

If a child has failed to turn up to school and there has been no communication from parents the school will follow up unexplained absences by phone call, email, text message and letters as necessary. The school will telephone all listed contacts on a pupil's records if the number one contact is unobtainable.

The school will:

- remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality via newsletters and the Parents Handbook.
- inform parents if we have concerns regarding their child's attendance and punctuality and, with 90% attendance or less, whatever the reason for the absence, are classified as persistent absentees.
- the school will seek to maintain high attendance levels at all times.

When attendance becomes a concern:

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools and local authorities will work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, schools should sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.



Authorised absences

Authorised absence means that Willington Prep has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away (granted an authorised leave of absence) or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Applications for an authorised leave of absence

Applications for authorised leaves of absence during the school day will only be granted in accordance with statutory guidance (Working together to improve school attendance) in the following circumstances:

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA).
- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
- 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 are then expected to 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 and will only be permitted if made in writing to the Headmaster - headmaster@willingtonschool.co.uk.

Apart from illness, no pupil should be away from Willington Prep without prior permission from the Headmaster.

Where possible, routine appointments, such as dentist appointments, should be arranged outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents should notify the school in advance and pupils should attend school for as much of the session as reasonably possible.

A leave of absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents and pupils belong. Parents are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence in advance.

Reporting duties

Willington Prep has statutory reporting obligations if a pupil fails to regularly attend and their absence is unauthorised. **Willington Prep must report unauthorised absences for a continuous period of 10 days or more to the local authority.**

Action will also be taken in accordance with the Missing Child Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy if any absence of a pupil from Willington gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

Admission register



In accordance with the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 the School will:

- maintain an admission register of all pupils (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) admitted to the school (also known as the school roll);
- inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from Willington Prep's admission register at non-standard transition points.

The admission register must be kept electronically and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy. The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil at Willington Prep, including their date of admission, information regarding parents and details of the school they last attended.

A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted. Where Willington notifies the local authority that the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide it with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the address of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives or can be contacted in an emergency;
- the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable;
- the ground (prescribed in regulation 9) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Attendance register

Willington Prep records and monitors the attendance of all pupils (both of compulsory and non-compulsory school age) in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024. The School uses the appropriate national attendance and absence codes system to enable it to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with regulation 10 of the Attendance Regulations. The attendance register is kept electronically and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

Willington Prep will also use these records to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) and work with pupils and parents to resolve any issues before they become entrenched. Willington Prep is required by law to take attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil is:

- physically present in school when the attendance register begins to be taken;
- or absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended;
- or attending a place other than the school;
- or absent.
-

The circumstances in which a pupil may be recorded as attending a place, other than the school, can include:



- Attending educational provision arranged by a local authority;
- For an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff;
- Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity;
- Attending an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by the school as part of the pupil's education;
- Attending a place for any other approved educational activity.

Recording absence

Absence will be recorded in accordance with the national absence codes set out in regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024 and statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance relating to:

- leaves of absence;
- other authorised reasons;
- unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause;
- unauthorised absence.

Remote education

Willington Prep is required to record all absence from in-person lessons. Willington may, in limited circumstances, provide remote education to enable pupils, who are well enough to learn but unable to attend the school site, to keep pace with their education. In the limited circumstances when Willington decides to use remote education for individual pupils when they are absent, the following will be considered:

- ensuring mutual agreement of remote education by Willington, parents, potentially pupils, and if appropriate a relevant medical professional.
- if the pupil has an Education, Health and Care plan or has a social worker, the local authority should also be involved in the decision;
- if remote education is being used as part of a plan to reintegrate back to school, putting a formal arrangement in place to review its efficacy regularly, alongside identifying what other support and flexibilities can be put in place to help ease the pupil back to school at the earliest opportunity;
- setting a time limit within which the period of remote education provision should be reviewed, with the aim that the pupil returns to in person education with the required support in place to meet their needs.

Pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code. Willington Prep will keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register. Where appropriate, this information may be used to make plans for a pupil's reintegration to school. Willington Prep will utilise a digital education platform that will be kept up-to-date and keep pupils safe. Staff will remain trained and confident in its use.

Unauthorised absence

The "unauthorised absence" code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given and where Willington is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence or delayed attendance meaning that the code for "unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance" is not appropriate. Examples include: holiday has not been authorised by the School or is in excess of the period determined by the Head;



the reason for absence has not been provided;

- a pupil is absent from school without authorisation;
- a pupil has arrived in school after registration has closed and without reasonable explanation.

Attendance Codes Definition:

/ \	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 (incl future schools & Open Mornings)
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 (incl exams & taster days)
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (incl Nursery)
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered at another school
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded
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 (e.g. due to adverse weather)
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
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established (Note: N is temporary: the correct code is entered as soon as the reason is known and no later than five school days after the session; if the reason still cannot be established, code O is used)
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

Reviewed Annually by the Safeguarding Team



Reviewed on: September 2026

Next review on: September 2027