Wylye Valley
Primary School

Love Care Respect

To aspire to being outstanding in everything we do, by always aiming higher.

"Let your light shine in all you say and do."

Matthew 5:16

Attendance Policy

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Introduction

This Attendance Policy is based on July 2026 the DfE published new guidance "Working Together to Improve School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities". The guidance is statutory and effective from July 2026.

The guidance is clear that improving attendance is everybody's business. It provides a framework that local authorities, schools, governing bodies and trusts must have regard to in order to support and maintain high levels of school attendance.

"Recognise that absence is a symptom and that improving pupil's attendance is part of improving the pupil's overall welfare." Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE February 2024

Attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that is insufficiently stated- pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

With this in mind, we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school.

To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the local governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Policy on Attendance

If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, who will contact a parent or guardian if no message has been received by 9.30am. Parents have the option to speak to someone in the office from 8.45 or leave a message on the answerphone to report the absence.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school admin team will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

Lateness

School gates will open at 8:45am. School gates are shut at 8.55 am. Lateness is classed as any child coming into school between 8.55 am and 9:10am

All children arriving after 8.55am must report to the office. The admin officer will ask for the reason for the lateness. The date, reason and child's name will be recorded.

Lateness is monitored monthly. Where children have persistent lateness problems the head will invite the parents into school to a formal meeting.

After 9:10am it is classed as an unauthorised absence.

Legally the school register must be taken twice a day.
At Wylye Valley School the register is taken at 8.50am (morning registration time) and once during the afternoon session at 12.45pm. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes. Pupils arriving after registers close will be marked as late (L).

Absence is recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as unauthorised. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as unauthorised absence and may be taken into account if any legal action is taken.

We will contact parents to address and improve attendance where:
A pupil's attendance falls below 95%,
A pupil has more than 3 weeks where they haven't achieved full attendance in a term (In Wiltshire there are 6 terms in an academic year)
A pupil has more than 5 recorded lates in a term
A pupil has a regular pattern of absence

Parents are asked to:
Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first and subsequent days of absence. Parents should make contact with school before the start of the school day. Please phone the office on 01985 850461 or email communications@wylyevalley.wilts.sch.uk

Keep the school informed, in cases of ongoing absence. A note from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always remain with the school.

Arrange medical or dental appointments outside of school hours unless there is urgent need for an appointment.

Tell the school if their child is going to be late, the reason why and expected time of arrival.

Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
The process for requesting leave of absence is explained further in this policy.

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:
Birthdays, staying at home because other members in the family are unwell, day trips and holidays in term time, arriving at school too late to get a present mark (After the close of registration), truancy, death of a pet and being tired.

We will contact the parent/carer if a child is absent and the parent/carer has not advised that the child will not be in school. Parents can expect contact on every occasion of an un-notified absence. We will initially phone parents by 9.30am. If we cannot speak directly with parents/carers then we will make contact with nominated emergency contacts to establish the reason for absence; this is in line with school safeguarding procedures.

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and no contact has been made with the school, a home visit will be made by school staff, to ascertain the safety and well-being of your child and establish the reason for absence from school.

After 10 days of unexplained absence and no contact with the school, we are obliged to notify the local authority. The local authority will follow their procedures for Children Missing from Education (CME) and parents may expect contact and visits from an Education Welfare Officer to ascertain the well-being and safety of your child.

<u>Collecting your child from school</u>

We ask that all parents/carers ensure that they are able to collect their children from school on time. School finishes at 3.00pm.
If parents are unable to collect their child as usual then they will need to communicate the alternative arrangements they have made with the school.
We will not release children in these circumstances to anyone who we have not been advised of.
If children remain uncollected from school the protocol is that the school should:

- contact parents or carers
- call emergency contacts if parents and carers cannot be reached so an authorised adult can come and collect the child
- keep records of late collections.

Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a week in advance. Days of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, such as a bereavement; a member of the services coming back for a specific date.

In accordance with Department for Education statutory guidance, leave of absence from school may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
Absence for the purpose of a holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance.
Parents are required to complete a leave of absence request form which must outline the exceptional circumstances for which the leave has been requested.
Leave of absence request forms must be completed in advance of the dates requested. We require 2 weeks notice unless the absence is related to an emergency.
We do not give retrospective agreement for leave of absence so any absence not advised to the school in advance will be unauthorised.
Requests will be considered by the headteacher and parents and carers will be advised if their request is agreed.
Any pupil who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence if they are ill in the period directly before or after the dates advised to school or if the absence is immediately before or after a designated school holiday period.
Parents/carers will be asked to provide evidence if a pupil does not return to school on the agreed date following a holiday as a result of delayed or cancelled flights or other travel arrangements.

Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Education Welfare Officer support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

<u>Consequences of persistent and severe absence</u>

At Wylye Valley school we will always work with you to address any attendance concerns.
If we have been unable to resolve the issue, despite a number of interventions, then we may have to refer you to the local authority where possible actions include:

<u>The National Framework for Penalty Notices</u>

The Department for Education has issued a national framework and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 which govern how and when penalty notices may be used.

All local authorities and schools must work within the new framework.

This means that whenever a pupil accrues 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period a school must consider whether a penalty notice should be issued. The unauthorised absence can relate to unexplained absence, absence that the school has not agreed to including for a holiday in term time or a pupil being late after the register closes.

Where a pupil has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks that is NOT related to a holiday in term time we may issue you with a Notice to Improve. This will provide you with an opportunity to engage with support to improve your child's attendance. If support is not working then we will refer the matter to the local authority who may decide to issue a penalty notice to you.

Where there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period as a result of a holiday taken in term time the absence will be notified to the local authority who may issue a penalty notice without further warning.

Each parent will receive a penalty notice for each child that has unauthorised absence. For example, 2 parents with 2 children who take a holiday in term time can expect to receive 4 penalty notices.

The new framework allows for parents to receive a maximum of 2 penalty notices for each of their children in a 3 year period.

The first penalty notice issued in respect of an individual child will be in the sum of £160 to be paid within 2 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

The second penalty notice issued in respect of the same child within 3 years shall be in the sum of £160.

If the national threshold is met on a third or subsequent occasion in 3 years then the local authority may present the matter to the magistrates' court.

or

2) The local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, imposition of orders such as Parenting Orders or even imprisonment.

or

3) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Policy on Attendance

The local governing body, supported by the authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the local governing body to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a report from the headteacher in each governors meeting. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance are reported to the governing body every seasonal term in governors' report.

After four episodes of lateness in a month a letter will be sent to parents by the school with the aim of addressing the situation. If the situation does not improve the parents will be invited to a formal meeting with the headteacher.

Letters will be sent out every seasonal term to the parents of children who have an attendance rate of less than 95% or have 50% or more broken weeks during a seasonal term.

If a child's attendance does not improve, the Headteacher will seek advice from the EWO and will ask the parents to attend a 'School Attendance Meeting'. Following this meeting, the attendance of that child will be monitored until a target has been met.

This policy will be reviewed by the local governing body every year.

Date: October 2026

Review date: October 2027

Wylye Valley C of E Aided Primary School

Leave of Absence Request Form

Taking your child out of school during term time may harm your child's academic progress.

Absences may only be authorised at the discretion of the school Governors in EXCEPTIONAL circumstances.

Circumstances which are notified to the school or Local Authority **after** a decision has been made by the Governors will not be considered. Therefore please be certain to provide details of the exceptional circumstances relating to your application below and attach any supporting evidence.

Please read the attached Local Authority leaflet which explains Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised Leave of Absence during term time.

Name of Child(ren)	
Date of Birth	
Class	
Date of First Day of Absence	
Date of Return	
Number of Days requested	
Known siblings and school(s) attending	

Exceptional Circumstances (reason) for Leave of Absence during term time:

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Signed: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Carer: _____

For school use:
Attendance%:
Total sessions pupil absent this academic year:
Total unauthorised absence this year:
Request authorised: Yes/No