

Attendance – Guidance for Families

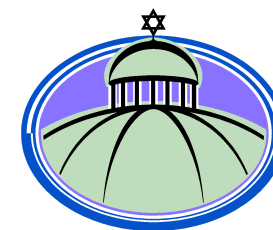
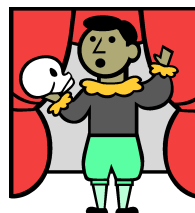
Updated March 2022

Our expectation is that pupils attend school every day for every session. We believe that regular, uninterrupted attendance secures the best possible learning achievement for all our children and we are committed to working in partnership with families to achieve this. Schools are expected to monitor all pupils' attendance records closely and to share these with the Local Authority and with the next school when pupils transfer.

Headteachers have no discretion to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are genuinely exceptional circumstances. It is the responsibility of parents to contact the school in writing when requesting any leave for their children so that each case can be considered on an individual basis.

Penalty Notices

When a leave of absence is taken and the school has not authorised the absence because the reasons are not considered 'exceptional', the school will request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice. In considering whether to do so, the school will consult the latest advice given from the LA. If the absence meets the threshold in this document, the school will request that a Penalty Notice is issued.



The following situations might be considered examples of 'exceptional circumstances':

- Return of parent from active service (Forces);
- Death or serious illness of a parent, step-parent or sibling;
- Young Carers;
- Disability or respite leave;
- Periods of obligatory religious observance;
- Approved public performances (with clear supporting evidence).

Any request for absence which might be considered as 'exceptional circumstances' should be put in writing to the Headteacher as far in advance as possible, including any relevant supporting documents. The decision whether to grant leave, and if so how much, remains with the Headteacher. Parents / carers will be notified of the Headteacher's decision at the earliest opportunity.

The following (not exhaustive) are examples of situations which would not typically be considered as exceptional:

- Family holiday/cheaper holiday dates;
- Educational visits arranged by family members during school time;
- Attendance at a wedding or christening;
- Visiting relatives either abroad or in the UK;
- Limitations on parents / carers leave' entitlement or dates; parents / carers' profession or place of work making it difficult to coincide school and work holidays;
- A family member going for medical treatment abroad.

Medical and Other Appointments

Parents / carers must avoid arranging appointments for their child during the day. However, if it is unavoidable, parents / carers must notify the school of the appointment details. A child should only be taken out of school for his/her own appointment, not because another family member has an appointment. This includes collecting a child early so a parent or carer can attend an appointment for someone else.

Lateness

School starts at **8.55am** and the register is taken at **9.00am**. If a child arrives at school after the start of the school day but within 30 minutes, they will be registered as 'late'; this is not an unauthorised absence and the child is counted as present for the morning session. Lateness beyond 30 minutes will be counted as an **absence**. This will be an unauthorised absence unless parents / carers provide the school with an acceptable reason.

Reporting Absence for Illness

Parents should inform the school by telephone of the reasons for their child's absence **by 9.00am** on the **first** day of the child's absence and on **each subsequent** day of absence.

If a child is absent with no explanation, school office staff will text or telephone the parents to ascertain the reason.

Please make sure that we have up to date details.

What is authorised and unauthorised attendance?

❖ **We will not authorise absence due to:**

- Lateness
- Other family members' appointments
- Transport difficulties
- Holidays in term time

❖ **We are able to authorise (at the Headteacher's discretion) absence due to:**

- Illness or medical treatment
- Education in a setting other than school (this would be pre-arranged and agreed with the school)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances such as those given in the examples overleaf.

This document has been updated in March 2022 in line with Wimborne Academy Trust's Attendance Policy and will be updated in line with further policy updates.