

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

AIMS

- 1.1 The School expects excellent levels of attendance and punctuality from all pupils. This is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances.
- 1.2 This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:
Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (DfE, January 2024);
Education and Skills Act 2008;
- 1.3 The aims of this policy are as follows:
 - 1.3.1 to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
 - 1.3.2 to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the School is able to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the School;
 - 1.3.3 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;
 - 1.3.4 to recognise the linkages between attendance / absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
 - 1.3.5 to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection
 - 1.3.6 to address the specific statutory obligations on the School to record attendance and absence.
- 1.4 The following School policies, procedures and resource materials are relevant to this policy:
 - 1.4.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - 1.4.2 Search for a Missing Girl procedure
 - 1.4.3 Learning Skills and SEND policy
 - 1.4.4 Disability policy
 - 1.4.5 Behaviour Management Policy (BMP)
 - 1.4.6 Parents' Contract: Terms and Conditions

2 Responsibility statement and allocation of tasks

- 2.1 The School's Governing Body recognises that excellent attendance is a key priority school for the School. The Deputy Head is the designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing attendance in School, referred to in this policy as the School's Attendance Champion (SAC).
- 2.2 The SAC'S responsibilities, as well as those of other staff, are outlined in paragraph 5.

3 The importance of good attendance & punctuality

- 3.1 The School recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. This is an integral part of the School's ethos and culture. In building a culture of excellent punctuality and attendance it recognises:
 - 3.1.1 the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life;
 - 3.1.2 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;
 - 3.1.3 the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and parents;
 - 3.1.4 that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies; and
 - 3.1.5 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.

4 School responsibilities

- 4.1 The School 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.
- 4.2 The School will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and parents.
- 4.3 Where there are challenges to attendance, the School will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.
- 4.4 The School 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 the School'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.
- 4.5 The School has robust 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.

5 Staff responsibilities

- 5.1 The SAC has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. However, all staff have a responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality amongst the pupil body. The SAC 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; the SAC also provides appropriate training and professional development for staff consistent with their roles and responsibilities.
- 5.2 House Staff should:
- 5.2.1 have a formal routine for registers being taken accurately each morning and afternoon (day pupils) and evening (boarders);
 - 5.2.2 seek explanations of absences required from pupils on their return to School;
 - 5.2.3 make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and follow up with pupil to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the School;
 - 5.2.4 look out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and inform the SAC of any specific concerns
- 5.3 Teachers should:
- 5.3.1 deal with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly;
 - 5.3.2 consider appropriate sanctions for pupils who arrive late to a lesson in line with the School's Behaviour Management Policy (BMP)

6 School arrangements

- 6.1 The School will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and has effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence. These registers are kept electronically.

7 Pupil responsibilities

- 7.1 School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. The School therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and punctuality and has systems in place to reward good attendance and manage poor attendance.
- 7.2 Pupils should be aware that:
- 7.2.1 they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each School day;
 - 7.2.2 they are expected to arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons;
 - 7.2.3 they should not leave a lesson or the School site without permission or otherwise in accordance with School rules;
 - 7.2.4 they should engage with the School's arrangements for recording and managing attendance as set out in this policy;
 - 7.2.5 any unexplained absence will be followed up;
 - 7.2.6 persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the School in line with the BMP.

8 Additional needs

- 8.1 The School has statutory reporting obligations if a pupil fails to regularly attend and their absence is unauthorised. The School must report unauthorised absences for a continuous period of 10 days or more to the local authority. A report to the local authority must also be made if the School has reasonable grounds to believe a pupil will miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively in a given school year due to sickness.
- 8.2 The School 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
- 8.3 The School will make reasonable adjustments¹ 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.
- 8.4 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 pupil's 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.
- 8.5 Where barriers are outside of the School'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.

9 Parent / carer responsibilities

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 This means pupils must attend every day that the School 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 the School.
- 9.3 The School 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.
- 9.4 Expectations the School places on parents can be found in 0 of this policy
- 9.5 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 the School about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the School unreasonably.

10 Training

- 10.1 **Staff:** The School 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:

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

APPENDIX 1

School arrangements

1 Managing attendance

- 1.1 The School 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 and set out in Appendix0 and Appendix0 respectively. The admission and attendance registers must be kept electronically and retained by the School for the relevant time period as stated by law.

2 The role of parents / carers

- 2.1 The School expects all Parents to:
 - 2.1.1 make any application for an authorised leave of absence at the earliest opportunity and in writing to the Headmistress;
 - 2.1.2 notify the School 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
 - 2.1.3 co-operate with the School to explore possible barriers to attendance and to improve it where attendance has been raised as an issue.

3 Registration and attendance checks

- 3.1 Morning Registration for all pupils is at 8.30am (including pupils in Sauveterre, France). Registration takes place in House. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes after the start of morning registration.
- 3.2 A summary of each morning's registration is reported to the SAC as soon as possible after 9.00am (UK time).
- 3.3 All Day Pupils are required to report for Afternoon Registration. All Lower and Upper School pupils must complete this registration at the Reception desk in Wakefield House; Sixth Form pupils must register in their House (either York House or Willis House). Afternoon Registration takes place from 12.00pm (12.10pm on Wednesday), and all Day Pupils must have registered in-person by 1.00pm (1.40pm on Wednesday). Afternoon Registration for Day Pupils is not taken on Saturday afternoons as there are no lessons after 12.00pm.
- 3.4 Registers are also taken 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. Any absence from lessons is followed up through our Reserve system.
- 3.5 All boarders are registered in House during the evenings, at a time specified by their House Staff.

4 **Reporting absence**

- 4.1 If a pupil is to be absent from School for any reason, the parent / carer should contact their daughter's House Staff by email or telephone by 8.30am on the first morning of absence;
- 4.2 Where a pupil is ill, the School should be notified of the nature of the illness.

5 **Arrangements for reporting subsequent absence**

- 5.1 Absence will be recorded on the Attendance Register as set out in O.

6 **Authorised absences**

- 6.1 Authorised absence means that the School 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.

7 **Applications for an authorised leave of absence**

- 7.1 Applications for authorised leaves of absence during the School day will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will only be permitted if made in writing to the Headmistress.
- 7.2 The School will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, the pupil's past attendance record and the relevant background context behind the request. However, extending and taking holiday during term time is not considered appropriate.
- 7.3 Apart from illness, no pupil should be away from School without prior permission from the Head.
- 7.4 Dental or medical appointments should be made during School holidays except in cases of emergency when the House Staff should be informed.
- 7.5 If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Head to determine the length of the time the pupil is permitted to be away from School. It will be recorded as an Authorised Absence.
- 7.6 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.

8 **Reporting duties**

- 8.1 The School has statutory reporting obligations if a pupil fails to regularly attendance their absence is unauthorised. The School must report unauthorised absences for a continuous period of 10 days or more to the local authority.
- 8.2 In the event that a pupil holding a Student or Child Student visa sponsored by the School under the Points Based System goes missing², the School will report to UKVI if the pupil misses ten consecutive expected contact points.

- 8.3 Each time the School's attendance register is completed it is treated as a contact point for these purposes.
- 8.4 The report will be made by the School's Level 1 user via the Sponsor Management and in accordance with prevailing UKVI guidance
- 8.5 Action will also be taken in accordance with the procedure for Search for a Missing Girl and Safeguarding and Child Protection policy if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

APPENDIX 2

Admission register

1 Admission register

- 1.1 In accordance with the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 the School will:
 - 1.1.1 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); and
 - 1.1.2 inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admission register at non-standard transition points.
- 1.2 The admission register is 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.
- 1.3 The school ensures that every entry in the School's admission register is preserved for six years beginning with the day on which the entry was made; and every back-up copy of the register is preserved for six years after the end of the school year that it relates to.
- 1.4 The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School, including their date of admission, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school they last attended, whether each pupil is a boarder or day pupil.
- 1.5 The School is legally required to notify the Local Authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admissions register at a non-standard transition point [in accordance West Berkshire's School Exit Form – see in appendix 4]. The notification includes all the details contained in the admissions register for the new pupil; specifically, their full name; sex; name and address known to be a parent of the pupil (and an indication of which parent the pupil normally lives with and which parents hold parental responsibility); address of new or additional places of residence; at least one contact telephone number at which the parent can be contacted in an emergency; date of birth; name and address of last School attended (if any); and details of whether they are a boarder or a day pupil.
- 1.6 When a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the School will provide the Local Authority with the information held on the admissions register (see 1.5 above) as well details of the destination school (if applicable), the expected start date there, and the grounds (prescribed in regulation 9) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

- 1.7 Where the School 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:
 - 1.7.1 the full name of the pupil;
 - 1.7.2 the address of the pupil;
 - 1.7.3 the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
 - 1.7.4 at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives or can be contacted in an emergency;
 - 1.7.5 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;
 - 1.7.6 name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable;
 - 1.7.7 the ground (prescribed in regulation 9) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

APPENDIX 3

Attendance register

- 1 **Attendance register**
 - 1.1 The School records and monitors the attendance of all pupils in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024
 - 1.2 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.
 - 1.3 The School 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.
 - 1.4 Day pupils only: the School is required by law to take attendance registers twice daily for all Day Pupils – once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.
 - 1.5 On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil [with the exception of a pupil who is a boarder] is:
 - 1.5.1 physically present in school when the attendance register begins to be taken; or
 - 1.5.2 absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended; or
 - 1.5.3 attending a place other than the school; or
 - 1.5.4 absent.
 - 1.6 The circumstances in which a pupil may be recorded as attending a place, other than the school, can include:

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

2 Remote education

- 2.1 The School is required to record all absence from in-person lessons.
- 2.2 The School 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.
- 2.3 Pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code. The School 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.

3 Unauthorised absence

- 3.1 The "unauthorised absence" code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given and where the School 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:
 - 3.1.1 holiday has not been authorised by the School or is in excess of the period determined by the Head;
 - 3.1.2 the reason for absence has not been provided;
 - 3.1.3 a pupil is absent from school without authorisation;
 - 3.1.4 a pupil has arrived in school after registration has closed and without reasonable explanation.

APPENDIX 4

Form referred to in Appendix 2. Point 1.5



SCHOOL EXIT FORM – For non-standard transfer points

Please complete in FULL

PUPIL NAME		DOB		NCY	
HOME ADDRESS					
POSTCODE					
CURRENT SCHOOL	Downe House School, Hermitage Road, Thatcham, RG18 9JJ	DATE LAST ATTENDED			
PARENTS/Carer NAME					
HOME NUMBER		MOBILE NUMBER			
EMAIL ADDRESS					
PARENTS/Carer NAME					
HOME NUMBER		MOBILE NUMBER			
EMAIL ADDRESS					
SIBLINGS NAME				DOB	
SIBLINGS NAME				DOB	
SIGNIFICANT OTHER (e.g. aunt/uncle/grandparent) or EMMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS					
ADDRESS					

PHONE NUMBER			
EMAIL ADDRESS			
Is this child PPG?	YES / NO		
NEW HOME ADDRESS			POSTCODE:
CONTACT NUMBER			
NEW SCHOOL NAME & ADDRESS			POSTCODE:
CONTACT NUMBER			
ANNEX A GROUNDS FOR REMOVAL (please specify)		OUTLINE REASON FOR LEAVING	
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION			

FOR OFFICE USE:

DATE RECEIVED:

Email to: cme@westberks.gov.uk**Revision History:**

Revision	Date	Description of changes	Requested By
	August 2024	Created	Matt Godfrey
	September 2025	Reviewed	Matt Godfrey

Review Leader: Deputy Head
Reviewed: September 2025
Next Review: September 2026

Review: DH (September 2026)