

The Wren School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Purpose and Background

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Of students who miss more than 50 per cent of school only three per cent manage to achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including Maths and English. 73 per cent of students who have over 95 per cent attendance achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C. (*Improving attendance at school DFE 2011*)

Regular attendance at school is crucial if The Wren School students are to achieve their potential and stay safe. Poor attendance patterns often start at a young age and worsen as students get older. It is vital that such patterns are picked up quickly, either through the transition process or if attendance starts to drop during a students' time at The Wren School. It is important to establish why a student has poor attendance and or punctuality and to address these issues in a positive manner. (*How to improve school attendance and punctuality, Ofsted 2013*)

Policy objectives

We will ensure that:

- Students, parents/carers and staff at The Wren School value good attendance and recognise that good, regular attendance is an achievement in itself;
- We raise the educational achievement of all students in the school;
- We value the individual and are socially and educationally inclusive;
- We promote regular school attendance at whole school level, class level and individual child level;
- We aim to raise the profile of attendance ensuring all individuals are convinced that attendance can and will improve. In addition, a strong partnership must be built between the parents/carers, students and the school. Staff reinforce our 100% expectation to parents/carers and students.

Management of the policy

School	This policy is implemented and managed by the assistant headteacher in liaison with the Headteacher.
Governing body	The local governing board will review and update this policy annually in line with all relevant legislation.
Approval	Ratified by local governing board – November 2019
Next review due	November 2020.

Associated policies

- Safeguarding
- Behaviour
- Health and safety
- Learning and teaching
- Equal Opportunities
- Pupil Premium
- SEN/D

Attendance practice and procedures

- The register for each student is a legal document to which reference is made for court cases, and which is used as a source of statistical information. It may be audited by the Local Authority. Therefore registers must be taken on Arbor for reflection time and period 5 within the first 10 minutes. Additionally registers must be taken within the first 10 minutes of each lesson.
- Students may only leave site during school hours for pre-authorised appointments, medical or exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers will pick students up in this instance or give written or telephone permission for them to leave. Students will need to sign out in this instance.
- If a student is absent due to an illness, parents/carers are requested to call the school prior to 8.50am.
- Try to make medical appointments appointment s outside of school hours. If not possible, only remove the child from school for the minimum amount of time necessary. If a student is likely to have a prolonged period of absence, which has been approved by a medical professional, work may be collated and sent home for them to complete. Where a student has visited a doctor or any other medical professional, a signed note, appointment card, copy of the prescription or any evidence of the appointment should be made available to the school for their records.
- Where a student is absent and a parent/carer has not called the absence line, a text will be sent to their parents/carers informing them of their son's/daughter's absence and asking them to contact the school. If contact is not made with the school within 3 days, a phone call will be made to parents/carers with a voicemail left. If contact is not made with the school by 2pm on this day, then the police and Children's social care will be notified.
- Any foreseen absence must be agreed by the headteacher in advance e.g. due to a bereavement to attend a funeral. Any foreseen absence not agreed in advance will be classed as an unauthorised absence and may result in legal action e.g. unauthorised holiday (see Appendix 1).

As a school, we realise that unfortunate sequences of events, genuine ill health or accidents can lead to an increase in absence and seek to be as supportive as possible to parents/carers and students in these circumstances. However, where absences are not of this nature, school enforcement measures will be taken.

Action that will be taken

In the case of sporadic unauthorised absence, the following actions will be applied:

- Any student whose attendance falls below 95 % - notification letter is sent (see appendix 2).
- Any student whose attendance falls below 93 % - notification letter is sent (see appendix 3).
- Any student whose attendance falls below 91 % - notification letter is sent and a two week attendance monitoring process begins (see appendix 4).
- Attendance meeting will be set up with staff member and the student/parent/carers.
- Any student whose attendance falls below 90% is referred to the education welfare officer (see appendix 5). This is deemed as persistent absence (see details below).

In the case of students whose attendance is excellent:

- Any student who has 100% attendance for a full term – notification letter is sent (see appendix 6).
- All students with 100% attendance for a full term will receive a certificate and will enter a draw for a prize at the end of each term.
- Tutor groups with the best attendance for the week will be acknowledged in weekly assemblies and will receive a reward.
- Students whose attendance has shown a great improvement during the academic year will receive a reward.

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence is a serious problem for students. Much of the work missed during days off school is never made up, leaving these persistently absent students at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. If, following contact from the education welfare officer, there is no improvement, a meeting will be called with parents/carers where they will be formally told that if attendance does not improve, a penalty notice may be requested and the matter will then be referred for court action if attendance improvements are not made. At this stage, the school will require evidence that medical advice has been sought before authorising any absence due to illness.

If at any time, the student's attendance does improve, then the procedure will be halted. If the attendance subsequently declines, the procedure will be picked up at the point where it was left.

Punctuality

Like attendance, punctuality is extremely important. Regular reports will be produced to flag up any concerns regarding punctuality. Students will receive an incremental consequence based on the number of lates within a given week or period of time. If the situation does not improve, phone calls home and/or a warning letter of concern will be sent to their parent/carer (Appendix 7), leading onto contact from The education welfare officer.

Students will be commended for improvements in punctuality and, as with attendance, the course of action will be resumed if punctuality then starts to decline.

Associated documents

Improving attendance at school, DFE 2011

How to improve school attendance and punctuality, Ofsted 2013

Appendices

1. Request for term-time absence
2. Initial attendance warning letter
3. Persistent absence warning letter
4. Role of Reading's EWO (September 2018 – July 2019)
5. Punctuality warning letter

Appendix 1: Request for Term time Absence



Request for Leave of Absence during Term Time

To be completed at least three weeks before the proposed leave of absence, i.e. holiday, medical procedure.

Education is a once in a lifetime opportunity and the Department for Education has recommended that holidays should not be taken in term-time. Therefore, approval for leave of absence during term-time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. In such situations, the school will need to see evidence to support the requested absence.

Please be aware that if you take your child out of school for any unauthorised leave of absences during term time, you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. **A Fixed Penalty Notice is issued per parent, per child.**

Parent/Carer(s) to Complete ALL BOXES in first section:-

Name of Student	Form:
Print parent(s) name and address Tel No:	Date this form completed
Purpose of absence	
Reason for absence during term time (or attach a letter of explanation)	
Proposed start date of absence. Number of school days =	
From (dates): To:	
Signed.....Parent/Carer(print name)	

School to complete -

Number of days absence requested		
Percentage attendance	12 school weeks prior to request:	From start of academic year:
Has holiday during term time been requested previously and if so when?		
Assistant Headteacher for Pastoral Signed Arbor Code	Comments	
Approved / Not approved? SignedHeadteacher Date.....		

Date School received form:

Entered on Arbor:

Please return form to Student Reception

Appendix 2: Below 95% concern letter



The Wren School
61-63 Bath Road
Reading
RG30 2BB
(Visitor Entrance via Southcote Lane, RG30 3AE)

☎ 0118 9591868

Email: admin@wrenschool.org

4th November 2019

Dear Parent/ Carer,

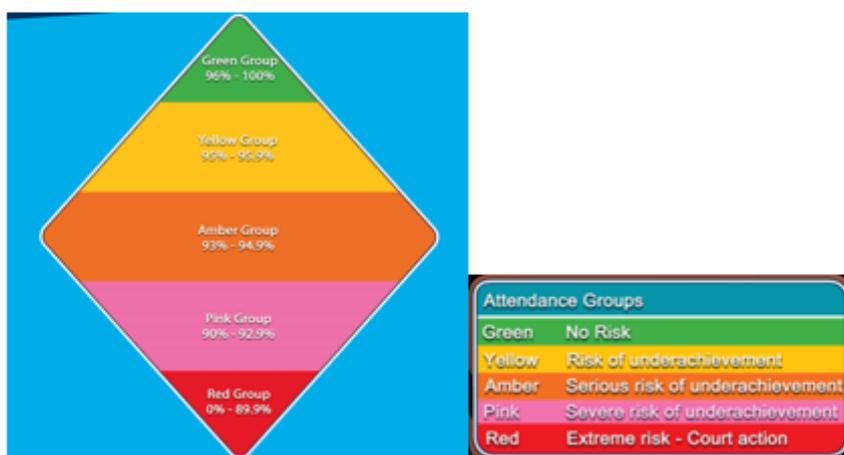
School attendance – please will you help?

Our records show that this academic year, your child's attendance is **below 95%**, which is lower than the majority of their classmates and below our school expectation of 96%. This puts them in the amber group on the attendance diamond below. **This means they are at serious risk of underachieving.**

To put this into perspective, 95% attendance is equivalent to missing **10 school days per academic year, which is 60 lessons.**

Students fall behind whenever they miss school; this is whether a student's absence is authorised or unauthorised.

You can have a positive impact on **your child's** attendance this year; we would really appreciate your help to achieve this. You can make the difference!



Kind regards,

Mr Harrison
Assistant Headteacher

Escaibur Academies Trust a company limited by guarantee
Registered in England: Company Number: 8146633
Registered Office: St John's Marlborough, Grantham Hill,
Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 4AX
Escaibur website: www.escaibur.org.uk



Appendix 3: Below 93% concern letter



The Wren School
61-63 Bath Road
Reading
RG30 2BB

(Visitor Entrance via Southcote Lane, RG30 3AE)

☎ 0118 9591868

Email: admin@wrenschool.org

4th November 2019

Dear Parent/ Carer,

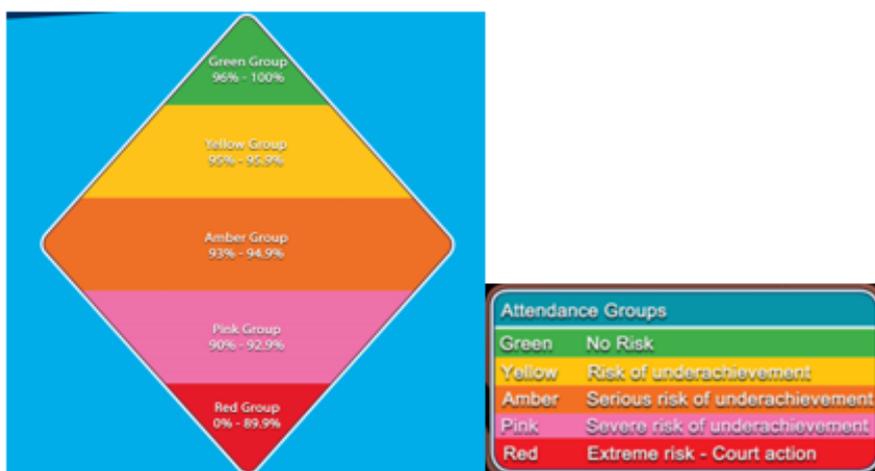
School attendance – please will you help?

Our records show that this academic year, your child's attendance is **below 93%**, which is lower than the majority of their classmates and below our school expectation of 96%. This puts them in the pink group on the attendance diamond below. **This means they are at severe risk of underachieving**

To put this into perspective, 93% attendance is equivalent to missing **14 school days per academic year, which is 84 lessons**.

Students fall behind whenever they miss school; this is whether a student's absence is authorised or unauthorised.

You can have a positive impact on **your child's** attendance this year; we would really appreciate your help to achieve this. You can make the difference!



Kind regards,

Mr Harrison
Assistant Headteacher

Excellbur Academies Trust a company limited by guarantee
Registered in England: Company Number 8546633
Registered Office: St John's Marlborough, Grantham Hill,
Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 4AX
Excellbur website: www.excellbur.org.uk



Appendix 4: Below 91% concern letter



The Wren School
61-63 Bath Road
Reading
RG30 2BB
(Visitor Entrance via Southcote Lane, RG30 3AE)
☎ 0118 9591868
Email: admin@wrenschool.org

4th November 2019

Dear <parents/carers name>,

WARNING LETTER - Absence Concern

Our records show that so far this academic year, <students name>'s attendance has been <?%>, which is below what we would expect. To put this into perspective, 91% attendance is the equivalent of 18 school days missed in an academic year. This equates to 108 lessons missed! This means they will miss almost half a school year over five years of secondary school.

Ongoing low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success. In fact, national research would suggest that your child is at extreme risk of underachievement. Low attendance could also affect future applications for jobs or college places, and many students have difficulty maintaining friendships if they have long, or numerous periods of absence.

If your child has a medical problem that The Wren School doesn't know about, please let us know. Communication of such could allow measures to be put in place to enable your child to keep up with work during their illness.

However, should your child's attendance continue to fall, this may result in a referral being made to Brighter Futures for Children for irregular attendance. They will then decide whether to pursue a penalty notice or proceed to prosecution.

Under section 444(A) of the Educational Act 1996, the Local Authority may issue penalty notices to parents of children with unauthorised absences from school.

We would appreciate your support to make sure <students name>'s attendance improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and your child will be placed on an attendance tracker for two weeks to support their attendance. If your child's attendance does not improve during this two week period, the Local Authority will contact you to discuss further what action may be necessary to support your child's attendance in school.

Kind regards,

Mr O Harrison
Assistant Headteacher

Escalibur Academies Trust a company limited by guarantee
Registered in England: Company Number: 8146633
Registered Office: St John's Marlborough, Grantham Hill,
Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 4AX
Escalibur website: www.escalibur.org.uk



Appendix 5: Role of Reading's Education Welfare Service (EWS)

For the 2018/19 financial year:

The Wren School will receive a 2 hour visit per fortnight by an assigned education welfare officer (EWO). This visit will involve:

- initial assessment/plan;
- discussions around student attendance, especially those of concern (below 90%);
- support in encouraging students to attend school and on time.

Along with the above, the EWO will carry out home visits (sometimes accompanied by a member of Wren School staff) and will attend meetings around safeguarding matters.

Following this, if concerns are not resolved, the EWO will open a Case File and there will be a cost per case factored in to the 2017/18 year's offer in addition to the base charge which will be calculated once Reading Borough Council has a clearer idea of the school's needs.

Appendix 6: 100% attendance letter



The Wren School
61-63 Bath Road
Reading
RG30 2BB

(visitor entrance via Southcote Lane, RG30 3AE)

☎ 0118 9591868

Email: admin@wren.excalibur.org.uk

16th November 2019

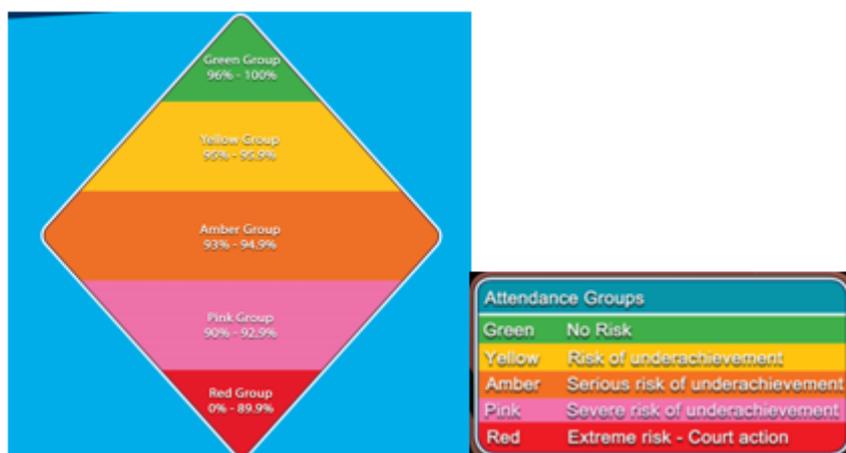
Dear Parents/ Carers,

100% attendance during term 1

Congratulations! Our records show that this academic year, your child's attendance for term 1 was **100%**. This is absolutely fantastic news and shows that your child and you value their education and personal development at The Wren School. This puts them at the top of the green group on the attendance diamond below, **meaning they are most likely to achieve their academic potential**.

Students fall behind whenever they miss school; this is whether a student's absence is authorised or unauthorised. We are delighted that your child has not missed any learning or opportunities during term 1.

Thank you for your support in having a positive impact on **your child's** attendance during term 1; we really appreciate your help to achieve this, it really does make a difference!



Kind regards,

Mr Harrison
Assistant Headteacher

Excalibur Academies Trust a company limited by guarantee
Registered in England: Company Number: 8146633
Registered Office: St John's Marlborough, Grantham Hill,
Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 4AX
Excalibur website: www.excalibur.org.uk



Appendix 7: Punctuality Warning letter



The Wren School
61-63 Bath Road
Reading
RG30 2BB
☎ 0118 9591868

<date>

Dear <parents'/carers' names>,

Reference: Punctuality Concern

I am writing to share our concerns that <student's name>'s punctuality is currently <?%>. The whole school target for punctuality is 97% and the government expectation is 95%. You will see that <student's name>'s punctuality falls below this.

As you know, a good education gives your child the best possible start in life. A good education helps young people to obtain secure employment and develop into mature and responsible citizens. Research has shown that punctuality to school is critical and hugely important, both for the individual child and for the sake of his or her peers. Late arrivals are disruptive for the whole class and can impact significantly on how well a child settles. The importance of punctuality is underlined by the government requiring schools to classify lateness to school as truancy.

I am certain that the academic achievement of your child is of utmost importance to you so I am sure you will help work with us to improve **his/her** punctuality and enable **him/her** to be given the best chance to succeed at The Wren School.

Kind regards,

Mr Harrison

Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral Leader)