



SOUTH WILTS GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS (ACADEMY)

SCHOOL AIMS

South Wilts is a progressive grammar school for girls, which aims to maintain high academic standards and cultural achievement within a caring environment. We seek to encourage responsibility and personal fulfilment so that students attain their maximum potential. The School is dynamic and works with the community to prepare its students for life-long learning and adult independence.

South Wilts Grammar School aims to value and respect all students equally and to provide equality of opportunity wherever possible.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction and aims

- 1.1 South Wilts Grammar School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community –students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play.
- 1.3 South Wilts Grammar School recognises the important role that school attendance plays in safeguarding students, realising that unexplained absences can put a student at risk, as can significant absence over a longer period of time. This policy and the associated procedures ensure absence is followed up in order to keep students safe.
- 1.4 As a school we aim for excellent attendance and consider this to be 96% and above however we also recognise that other school practices which are beneficial to the school community such as a staggered start to the Autumn Term and the date of year 11 study leave have an impact on individual attendance.

2. School's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at South Wilts have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day.
- 2.2 Attendance Leader
A member of the Senior Leadership Team (Pastoral) will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data is available and relevant issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. Parents will regularly be reminded about the legal requirement for and importance of good school attendance and a report prepared for the governing body.
- 2.3 Registration

- i) The school marks the attendance register accurately twice each day; once at the start of the day between 8.45 and 9.05 and once during the afternoon session between 12.55 and 1.00. Classroom teachers and tutors are responsible for completing the attendance registers and the Attendance Officer will ensure the correct codes are in place.
- ii) The registers will close at **9.05 am** and **1.00 pm**. Any student who arrives **after** the closing of the register must sign in the late book at Reception. Those who arrive after 8.45 are also asked to sign in at reception when a tutor has closed the register, e.g. on assembly days. Students who arrive late without good reason will be subject to sanctions. For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building and therefore **it is important that all students arriving late follow this procedure**.
- iii) For the same reason it is important that students leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day also report to reception and sign in the Signing in and out book

2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended. The decision about whether any absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the school.
- ii) South Wilts Grammar School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be damaging to a child's education and will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable. If absence is frequent or continuous, pastoral staff will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. If a student's attendance falls below the 90% threshold, the school may seek permission to contact the GP or a consultant before absences will continue to be authorised. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.
- iii) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
 - (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
 - a student is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
 - in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance and where it has been agreed that the parent could not take the holiday at another time and that it will not be detrimental to the student's education at that time.
 - (b) where the school is satisfied that the student is too ill to attend;
 - (c) where the student has a medical appointment (although parents are encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send her to school beforehand);
 - (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;
 - (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong;

(f) in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

iv) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation
- the student is staying at home to mind the house
- the student is shopping during school hours
- the student is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday
- the student is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission
- the student has taken study leave where no study leave has been granted

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register. This includes participation in elite sporting opportunities where the school will satisfy itself that the supervision of the student fulfils the safeguarding duty of the school.

2.6 Class registers

In order to track students' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of students, subject teachers will take a register at the beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness. If a student is absent from a lesson having been marked present for registration, the school will attempt to locate the student on the premises and notify parents if they cannot be found.

2.7 Staff Training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

2.8 Early arrival and late departure from school

Students are able to use N5 if they arrive early to school and then the LRC from 8.15. There is no supervision of students before 8.15 and students are not expected to be in other buildings on the school site. The LRC is also open afterschool until 5.00 and 4.30 on Fridays and students are expected to use this space if they are on site after 3.45. To have students unsupervised at times other than this raises issues of safeguarding.

3. **Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body as appropriate.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group, tutor group, at subject level and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by ethnicity, students with special educational needs and those who are a member of any vulnerable group.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DFE and Wiltshire Council within the stipulated time frame when requested.

4. **Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

4.1 Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

4.2 First-day calling

South Wilts Grammar School has in place a system of first-day calling. Parents will be telephoned as early as possible on the morning of the first day a student is absent without explanation by the Attendance Officer in the Main Office to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

4.3 Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a student's absence the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences.

4.4 Referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS)

If there are 10 days of unauthorised absences or after 15 days of absence the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

4.5 Unexplained absences

These will be followed up by Form Tutors and letters sent home to parents to seek an explanation before deciding whether the absences should be authorised or not.

4.6 Reintegration Support

The Pastoral Support will speak to parents of students absent for 4 days or more to establish a link and to organise work to be sent home if appropriate. She will then meet with students on their return to school to ease anxiety and assist with any necessary catch up.

5. **Leave of Absence**

5.1 Term-time holidays may be authorised only in exceptional circumstances

5.2 We will consider every application individually, but the policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday. Applications for leave of absence should be submitted on the Leave of Absence/Holiday Form.

5.3 Requests for absence are discussed with the Head of Section and the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances.

5.4 South Wilts Grammar School will consider authorising up to 10 days leave of absence for:

- service personnel on active service and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during normal school holiday time
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- parents who are subject to a strict and non-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect

5.5 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday
- availability of the desired accommodation
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- overlap with beginning or end of term

5.6 We will respond to all requests for leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

5.7 If a school does not authorise the absence and it amounts to 10 or more sessions of holiday within 6 months in the school year, the school will refer the matter to the Educational Welfare Officer and a fixed penalty notice may be issued amounting to a fine of £60 which if not paid promptly will lead to a fine of £120, which if not paid will lead to proceedings in the magistrates courts.

5.8 A written warning that this course of action may be followed appears on the form for parents to complete when they request leave of absence.

6. **Parents' / carers' responsibilities**

6.1 Under section 7 of the 1996 Education Act the prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers.

6.2 South Wilts Grammar School expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school

6.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- notify school on the first day of absence either by phone or e-mail.
- follow this up with a written letter of confirmation on the student's return to school.

7 Students' responsibilities

7.1 All students should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their form tutor.

7.2 Students should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their form tutor a note from their parents to explain the absence. Students also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

7.3 If a student has an unauthorised absence she is expected to complete a work record and have this signed by the appropriate class teachers and Head of Section. In some circumstances an absence may be authorised after a completed work record has been received.

8. Governors' responsibilities

8.1 The Governing Body shall ensure that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and good attendance of children who are students at the school.

8.2 This policy will be reviewed within the Governing Body cycle of policy reviews.

REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity

L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Reviewed by	Date of Review / approval	Review cycle	Next Review Date	Statutory / Non statutory	Website
Curriculum	2.2.16	Annually	Spring 2017	Advisory	Yes