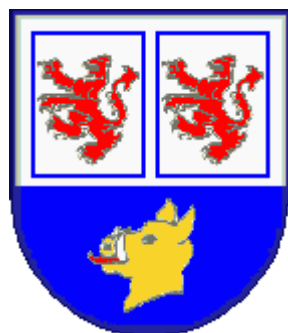


# Willington Primary School



## School Attendance Policy



**Date of policy: December 2011**

**Date of Review: January 2014**

# **WILLINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## **Ethos**

Willington Primary School is committed to the principles stated in this policy document. We believe that all students benefit from the education we provide, and therefore from regular school attendance. In order to achieve this we will take appropriate action to ensure that all students achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any barriers, which may impede full attendance, are addressed as quickly as possible.

Willington Primary School recognises the importance of attendance in school and is fully aware of the correlation between high levels of attendance and attainment. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of others. Children may be at risk or harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of Willington Primary School, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Willington Primary School seeks to provide an environment and foster an ethos where high levels of attendance are the norm, while providing support and encouragement to improve, whenever high levels of attendance are not achieved.

Willington Primary school is committed to the 'Every Child Matters' agenda and fully recognises the impact that attendance has on the five outcomes of the agenda.

## **Aims:**

Willington Primary School aims to ensure that:

- All pupils have an equal right and access to, an education in accordance with the National Curriculum.
- No pupil will be deprived of their educational opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of other students.

## **It is recognised that:**

- The majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peers and to prepare themselves to take place in society

- Some pupils and their parents/carers may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child's attendance at school as required by law (ref Section 7, 1996 Education Act).

### **Expectations**

Willington Primary School expects that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day
- Carry out any work provided by the school during an authorised leave period.

Willington Primary School expects that parents will:

- Endeavour to arrange health appointments out of school hours wherever possible
- Inform a member of staff of any reason or problem that may prevent their child from attending school
- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their child attends school
- Contact school, as soon as is practical and preferably on the morning of absence, whenever the child is unable to attend school
- Seek permission from the school for any leave of absence.

Parents and children can expect the following from Willington Primary School:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- Early contact when a pupil is absent without explanation
- Absence of any attendance problem notified to the school
- Referral of specific attendance issues to supporting agencies where appropriate
- Attendance figures published in the Schools Prospectus to parents.

### **Promoting Regular attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everyone's responsibility – parents, carers, pupils and members of school staff.

### **To help us focus on this we will:-**

- Give you details on class attendance in our weekly home newsletter
- Report to parents/carers on how children are performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this rates to their attainments
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements

- Reward good or improving attendance through class rewards, certificates and events
- Run promotional events when parents/carers, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across this school.

#### **The school will respond to non-attendance by:**

- Contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence if no reason for absence has been received. (Contact will be either by phone call, text message or letter. See appendices)
- Where a pattern of non-attendance is emerging the parent/carer will be contacted and invited to work with school staff to help resolve the difficulties (see appendices)
- Where there is no response to school intervention and where the absence or pattern of absence has persisted without explanation, the school can refer to the Educational Welfare Service and request a referral once the pattern of absence meets the service referral criteria.

#### **Holiday Absence:**

The current law does not give parents any entitlement to take their children out of school for a holiday during term time.

Schools are no longer allowed to issue holiday request forms. Parents must now complete a request for leave of absence during term time form.

Any application for leave of absence must only be in 'exceptional' circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are 'exceptional' and warrant the granting of leave.

In 'exceptional' circumstances, a request for absence must be made in advance, to the Headteacher, who will inform you of his/her decision prior to booking your holiday.

If a request for leave is not authorised by the Headteacher and the pupil goes on holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, which then stays on a child's permanent record.

We are required by law to report unauthorised absences to the Local Authority, who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice, which means a parent may be fined by the Education Welfare Service. The regulations do stipulate that fixed penalty fines will be issued and from 1 September 2013 parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Fixed penalty notices will now be issued to all parents who have parental responsibility and whom can be traced. This means that both the Father and Mother of a child will receive separate fines, under the new regulations, and that each parent will incur a fine for each child. Please be aware that the proceeds from fixed penalty fines DO NOT go to the school.

#### **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of action can lead to sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:-

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children, or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed with the school

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child.

### **Absenteeism**

Pupil's absenteeism is highlighted by the school when their percentage of attendance falls below 95%. Absence below this level can cause considerable damage to any child's education prospects. Willington Primary School monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case which is at risk is given priority. Pupils are tracked and monitored carefully and parents/carers are informed immediately. We combine this with academic monitoring where absence affects attainment.

All pupils who fall into this category are subject to an action plan and the plan may include:-

- Allocation of additional support through a mentor
- Use of circle time
- Individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance
- Support from the Parent Support Adviser if applicable

## Appendix 1

### Electronic Registration

Willington Primary School records registration using the SMS electronic system. This enables effective and efficient monitoring of attendance on a daily basis as well as allowing the identification of longer-term trends which is used to inform school policy and practice.

### Using the correct and appropriate attendance codes

Accurate recording is essential in order to meet legal requirements and promote the safety of all pupils.

#### Attendance codes

Reg Codes	Description	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Educated off site	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual Registration (other estab)	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
E	Excluded (no alt provision made)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before registration closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical /dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study Leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after Registration Closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity	Out for whole session
W	Work Experience	Approved Educational activity	Out for whole session
#	School closed to pupils and staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced Closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
X	Non-compulsory school age	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
-	All should attend / no record	No Mark	No mark for session

Staff responsible for entering the codes has a thorough understanding of the issues regarding attendance and receives regular training in accordance with Local Authority guidance. The administrative staff and Business Manager are responsible for checking and altering absence codes submitted by teaching staff once a reason has been sought.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Safeguarding – First Day Contact System**

We emphasise parents/carers prime responsibility for ensuring their child's attendance by asking them to inform school as soon as possible on the first day of absence. We do this by correspondence on newsletters, school prospectus, parent's evenings, assemblies and the school website. There is also a health and safety aspect for first day contact – a child who is missing from school could be injured or worse.

If a pupil arrives late to school after 9:10am and registration is closed it is the responsibility of the administrative staff to record lateness in the absence diary and amends the electronic register as appropriate.

If a pupil is absent with no reason, school administrative staff contact the parent/carer prior to 10am on the morning of first absence to find out why their child is absent. If no contact is made a text message will be sent through Teachers2Parents asking them to contact the school as soon as possible. If no reason is sought appendix 5 (stage 1 letter) is to be sent to the home address of pupil on 2<sup>nd</sup> day of absence. All actions are to be recorded in the absence diary located in the main school office.

If a pupil already has an attendance action plan in place the administrative staff consults the plan to ascertain if other agencies should be informed i.e. Educational Welfare Service or Parent Support Advisor.

Pupil contact forms and reminders on newsletters and the schools text messaging system are regularly sent to parents/carers to ensure we have the correct contact details.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Attendance Alert Protocol**

The Headteacher along with the School Business Manager will analyse absence data on a half termly basis. This ensures we have a clear understanding of attendance issues within school. Anecdotal evidence about reasons for absence and patterns of absence can be misleading.

Attendance data can help strategic planning and enables Willington Primary School to manage attendance issues more effectively. Whole school attendance figures produced half termly based on individuals and year groups can indicate factors such as:-

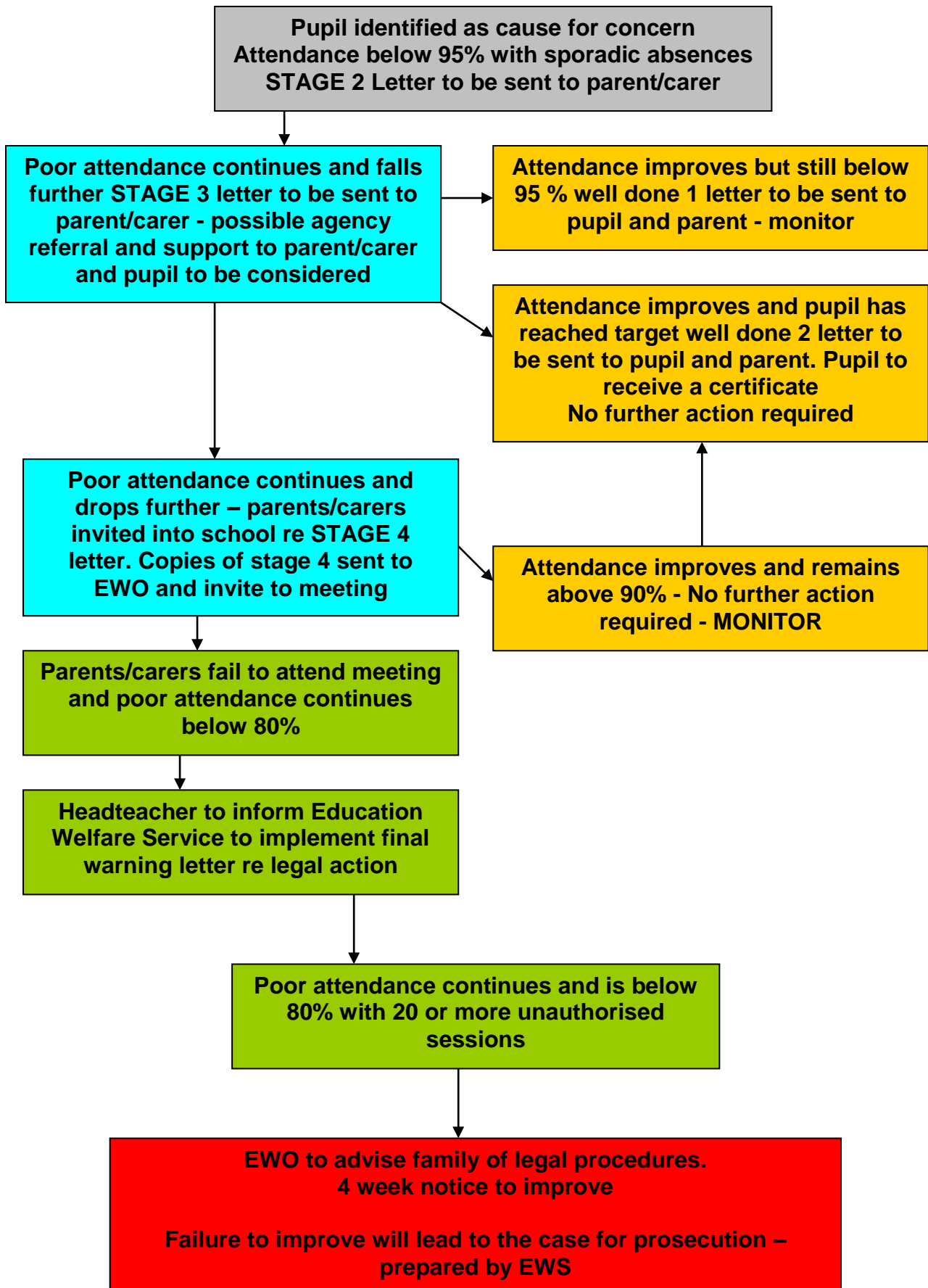
- Declining attendance
- Effect of seasonal attendance
- Effect of staff absenteeism
- Fall in attendance preceding training days or holidays
- Effect of activity days or residential trips

Continuous analysis of individual pupil attendance can give scope for strategic planning. By identifying those levels which we consider are indicators of persistent absenteeism or irregular attendance, it is possible to identify the extent of the problem and action taken.

Pupils which are identified as a cause for concern or are indicated as persistent absentees (attendance below 95% with sporadic absences) a pupil action plan is to be completed and the following protocol followed.



**Willington Primary School**  
**Persistent Absentee Procedure**



## **Appendix 4**

### **Raising the Profile to Improve Attendance and Punctuality**

We raise the profile of attendance and the wider community through the use of whole school agreements, parent's evenings, school newsletters and other communications. Letters are sent out automatically if attendance falls below a certain level.

When welcoming and inducting new parents/carers and pupils it is important to raise awareness of the importance of punctuality and attendance. As part of staff induction new staff are briefed on Willington Primary School's philosophy on attendance.

We communicate frequently with parents/carers about positive achievements and improvements in ways which emphasise the responsibility and role of parents in partnership with the school. Regular reminders are issued to parents of school procedures of notifying the school of a pupil's absence. We have installed a parent text messaging service to improve attendance communication.

### **Strategies we use to improve attendance and punctuality**

#### **Late Gates**

The administrative staff stand at the school gates and record names of late arrivals. A letter is given to parents informing them of their child's lateness to school.

#### **Breakfast Club**

The breakfast club is run from 8:30am and costs the very low price of 50p per child. Children can access the club as a drop in service and do not need to book prior to the event. Pupils are encouraged to attend if their attendance/punctuality is an issue.

#### **Attendance Cup**

Each week the class with the highest attendance wins the attendance cup and receives a prize in Golden Time on a Friday. The weekly newsletter promotes the winning class.

#### **Attendance Certificates and Prizes**

At the end of each school year pupils with 100% attendance receive a book voucher and certificate. A prize is also awarded for the Most Improved Attendance.

#### **Educational Welfare Service**

Pupils are referred to our Educational Welfare Officer to provide extra support and advice to the family.

### **Parent Support Advisor**

Pupils are referred to our in-house Parent Support Advisor to provide pupil and family support which may include workshops with parents/carers and pupils.

### **Attendance Become a Whole School Issue**

At Willington Primary School we see attendance as a whole school issue and have various ways in which we raise awareness.

- Raised profile of attendance with staff i.e. staff briefings
- Class teachers are able to access attendance records via the SIMS system
- Parents evenings and reports used to emphasise attendance
- Attendance print out and action plans copied to class teachers to raise awareness of issues
- Analysis of data to determine effect on attainment
- Headteacher reports to Governors attendance rates
- Headteacher and governors agree on attendance target
- Safeguarding strategies
- Anti-bullying
- Access to the Curriculum
- Behaviour Management

Appendix 5 – Stage 1 Letter – Unexplained Reason for Absence

Date:-

Dear Parent

**Re: Un-authorised Absence**

**Name of child**.....

We have noticed from our records that your child was absent from school with

no reason on the following date/s: .....


If we do not have a reason it will be marked as an un-authorised absence and the educational welfare officer will be informed. We have tried to contact you on several occasions, please could you check your details with the school office. It is important to have up to date contacts as we may need to telephone you in an emergency.

Please complete the attached form and return to school as soon as possible.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Walker  
School Business Manager

 .....

My child ..... was absent on

..... due to .....

.....

Signed.....parent/guardian

## Appendix 6 – Stage 2 Letter

Parent of

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

**Name:**

**DoB:**

As a headteacher at Willington Primary School one of my duties is to ensure all children aged 5 -11 years attend school regularly and on time. When I checked the school attendance I noticed your child's attendance is below 95% which is the Government's minimum attendance target for primary school children.

I can see from the registration certificate (attached) that absences have been genuine and you have followed the correct procedure by contacting the school.

- **Attendance** %
- **Authorised Absence** %
- **Unauthorised Absence** %
- **Target** 95.0%

The information below shows how attendance can effect your child's future progression.

**Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year**

*Excellent attendance: These young people will almost certainly Get the best grades they can leading to better prospects for college, university or work.*

**95%: 10 days absence a year**

*These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and have opportunities for college, university or work, but could still improve their attendance.*

**90%: 19 days absence per year**

*Young people in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.*

**85%: 29 days absence per year**

*Young people in this group are missing six weeks of school per year; it will be very difficult for them to keep up with work and they are unlikely to do their best.*

**80%: 38 days absence per year**

*Young people in this group are missing a year of school over five years of education; it will be almost impossible to keep up with work.*

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance please do not hesitate to contact me. The aim of the school is to offer support to young people and families with any concerns which may impact upon your child's education.

We look forward to your support.

Yours sincerely

Mr Cornforth  
Headteacher

## Appendix 7 Stage 3 Letter

Parent of

Date

Dear Parent

**'s attendance is currently % a decrease of %**

As headteacher at Willington Primary School one of my duties is to ensure all children aged 5 – 11 years attend school regularly and on time. When I checked the school attendance this time I noticed 's attendance is below 95% which is the government recommendation.

I can see from 's attendance certificate that absences have been genuine and you have followed the correct procedure by contacting us on the morning of his absence (change accordingly). I am concerned however, that 's attendance has dropped further since our last correspondence.

Often when children are absent for genuine reasons or not this can have a negative impact on their progress both socially and academically.

If after receiving this letter you would like to speak to me about this or any other matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

The aim of the school is to offer support to young people and families with any concerns which may impact upon your child's school attendance.

We look forward to your support in this matter and an increase in 's attendance.

Yours sincerely



Mr Cornforth  
Headteacher

Appendix 8 Stage 4 Letter

Parent of  
DL15 OPU

Date

Dear Parent

**'s attendance is currently %**

As headteacher at Willington Primary School one of my duties is to ensure all children aged 5 – 11 years attend school regularly and on time. When I checked the school attendance this time I noticed 's attendance has not improved since our last correspondence.

**I would like to invite you to a meeting on at to discuss how we can support you to improve 's attendance. Our Educational Welfare Officer will also be in attendance to provide support and advice. If this time is not suitable please call in at the office to discuss a suitable alternative.**

We look forward to your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mr Cornforth  
Headteacher



Appendix 9 – Well done 1 letter

Parent of

Date

Dear Parent

**Well Done (Name)!**

**'s attendance is currently % an improvement of %**

As headteacher at Willington Primary School one of my duties is to ensure all children aged 5 – 11 years attend school regularly and on time. When I checked the school attendance this time I noticed's attendance has increased but still below 95% which is the government recommendation.

I can see from's registration certificate that absences have been genuine (see attached) and you have followed the correct procedure by contacting the school.

Often when children are absent for genuine reasons or not this can have a negative impact on their progress both socially and academically.

If after receiving this letter you would like to speak to me about this or any other matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

The aim of the school is to offer support to young people and families with any concerns which may impact upon your child's school attendance.

We look forward to your support in this matter and keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely

Mr Cornforth  
Headteacher

Appendix 10 – Well Done Letter 2

Parent of

Date

Dear Parent

**Well Done (Name)!**

**'s attendance is currently % an improvement of %**

As headteacher at Willington Primary School one of my duties is to ensure all children aged 5 – 11 years attend school regularly and on time. When I checked the school attendance this time I noticed 's attendance has increased and he/she has reached the target of 95%.

If you require any further advice or support in this matter please do not hesitate to contact us.

Well done and keep up the good work!

Yours sincerely

Mr Cornforth  
Headteacher

Appendix 11 – Late Gate Letter

Willington Primary School

# Late Gate!

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer

Name of child:

You have been given this note because your child has arrived late in school today (after 9:00am).

It is essential that children form good habits of punctual attendance at school from the earliest age. Children who arrive late in school can often:

- **miss vital parts of the lesson**
- **disrupt other children's learning when the lesson is underway**
- **find it very embarrassing entering a class when he/she is late**

If your child arrives at school late without a genuine reason or lateness is consistent we have to record this as an un-authorised absence.

The Education Welfare Officer regularly checks registers and further action may be taken for any irregular attendance which includes lateness.

Please support your child and ensure they arrive in time for school.

If you wish to discuss this matter please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you.

Willington Primary School



*Absence Action Sheet*

Appendix 12 – Absence Action Sheet

Date	Name of Pupil	DOB	Address	Telephone	% Attendance
		<b>Class</b>			
<b>Notes:-</b>					
<b>EWO informed:</b>		<b>Letter sent to parent:</b>		<b>Report received from EWO:</b>	
<b>Further Action :</b>					