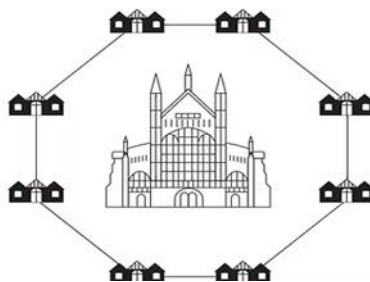


## Winchester Linked schools Partnership Joint Statement on School Attendance



As schools working together in strong partnership, we are united in our commitment to promoting strong attendance for all pupils. We are committed to understanding and supporting families where challenges arise, working in the best interests of children towards the shared goal of achieving strong attendance at school by all children in our community.

We know that good attendance is not only key to securing strong academic outcomes, helping children to make the most of their learning opportunities, it also helps to build positive habits that support future learning and success.

Regular attendance plays a vital role in developing social skills, deepening friendships, and embedding a sense of belonging within the school community that are all part of securing good mental health and resilience.

To ensure consistency and fairness, our schools have agreed a shared approach to authorising absence requests for pupils. Schools will liaise and work closely where there are siblings across our settings.

This includes authorising absence for:

- Medical appointments
- Religious observance for those practising their faith, where a day of religious observance has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs eg the first day of Ramadan, Divali, or Pesach but fall within term time (whereas Christian observance dates often fall within school holidays times)
- Exceptional family circumstances (agreed in advance with evidence where appropriate) where we may agree a day for the event itself, providing the child has strong attendance overall
- Approved educational activities such as representing the county or country in sporting competitions, music exams.

We have also agreed that we will not be able to authorise absence for:

- Holidays during term time

- Days off for birthdays or family events not considered exceptional
- Absences without a clear and valid reason

All schools in our partnership are committed to working closely with parents and carers to support good attendance.

Where there are barriers to regular attendance, we will work together to understand and address these, ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive.

We also recognise that sometimes children may feel discomfort about attending school. While it might feel supportive for parents or carers to suggest a "wellbeing day" in response to this discomfort, this is only a short-term fix to a situation that could become more complex over time.

Talking to the school about the challenges your child may be facing allows us to work together to support them. Where there are concerns about a child's attendance owing to health reasons, the school will support by attending a joint meeting with parents/carers and the GP or registered health professional in order to plan ways in which to overcome the barriers to good attendance.

We warmly invite parents and carers to contact their child's school to discuss any concerns around attendance. By understanding your individual circumstances, we can work together to provide the right support and help overcome any challenges that may be affecting your child's ability to attend school regularly.

Thank you for your continued partnership in helping us to prioritise attendance and wellbeing across our school communities.