

WILLOW PARK SCHOOL

Attendance: a guide for families — September 2026

Belong • Commit • Achieve

School matters because your child matters. Every day in school helps your child feel safe, build friendships, learn and grow in confidence. We know that for some of our pupils, getting to school can be genuinely hard. If that is true for your child, you will not be blamed or judged here. We will work it out with you.

What we ask of you

- **Call us by 8.00am on 01908 348259** on each day your child is unexpectedly absent and tell us the reason.
- Try to book medical and dental appointments outside school hours. If you can't, bring your child in before and after.
- Tell us early if something is making school difficult transport, sleep, worries, friendships, home life. The sooner we know, the sooner we can help.
- Come to meetings and work with us on any plan we agree together.

What you can expect from us

- A named member of staff who knows your child and stays your consistent point of contact.
- A calm welcome for every pupil, every day including late arrivals. No public telling-off, no shaming.
- Practical help to remove barriers: adjustments to routines, sensory needs, timetables and transitions.
- We will usually accept your word when your child is ill. We do not demand doctor's notes as a matter of routine.
- Honest conversations. If attendance is becoming a worry, we will tell you early and plan with you, not around you.

If attendance becomes a serious concern

We will invite you to a support meeting and agree a written plan with clear actions for us, for you and for your child. Where it helps, we can bring in other services health, family support, the local authority with you involved at every step. Formal or legal steps are a last resort, taken only by your child's home local authority, and only where support has not worked. Our aim is always the same: your child back in school, feeling they belong.

A note on safety

Schools have a legal duty to check on children who are absent without explanation. If we cannot reach you, we may visit home or contact other services. This is not an accusation it is how we make sure every child is safe.

Letters and fines

If we write to you about attendance, the letter is an invitation to talk, not a telling-off. It will always say what we've noticed, what help we can offer and who to contact. As an independent school, Willow Park cannot fine parents. Any formal step could only come from your child's home local authority, only as a last resort after support has been tried and never where a child is unable, rather than unwilling, to attend because of anxiety, emotional distress or another identified need. In those situations our response is understanding, adjustment and a gradual, supported return.

Who to contact

- **Absence reporting and day-to-day queries:** Maisie Matlock, Attendance Officer — 01908 348259 / admin@willowparkschool.co.uk
- **Attendance support and safeguarding:** Vicki Gunner, Senior Attendance Champion and Designated Safeguarding Lead via the school office, marked for her attention: Sandra O'Brien-Masarati, Inclusion Team Manager; Inclusion Team Mentors: Dawn Walker, Sheree Johnson, Naomi Yates and Cynthia Monteiro

School hours	Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri: 8.30am–3.20pm • Wed: 8.30am–1.40pm
Registers	Morning: taken at 8.45am, open for 30 minutes (closes 9.15am) Afternoon: taken at 1.00pm, closes 1.30pm