



Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Woods Loke Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils 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 will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. There is a direct link between high attainment, good progress and good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community - pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors - have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.3 The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Woods Loke Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance. We will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 **Attendance Leader**
The Headteacher, Joel Crawley will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting excellent attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team, are made available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance).



2.3 Attendance Manager

Alison Barnard (Office Manager) is attendance manager and maintains an electronic attendance register, monitors attendance on a daily basis, carries out First Day Calling, tracks attendance patterns, produces attendance reports and liaises closely with the Attendance Leader. The attendance manager will prepare a report for the governing body each half term or as required. The attendance manager will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. Any concerns will be passed to the Attendance Leader. The attendance manager will arrange and attend meetings, on behalf of the school, with parents to discuss concerns relating to attendance.

2.4 Registration

- The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers/ HLTA's are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown below).

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 or 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

- The register will be called promptly at **8.55 am** and again **at the start of the afternoon session** by the classroom teacher. A mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child. Afternoon registers are taken at 1.00pm.
- The registers will close at **9.10 am** and **1.15pm**. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will be marked as unauthorised late, this counts as an absence mark. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as late and will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (covered later in this policy).

2.5 Categorising Absence

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent 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 in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the attendance manager and ultimately the Attendance Leader.

- Woods Loke.School recognises the clear links between attendance, attainment and good progress, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for

non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Woods Loke school will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their children's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

- If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 1 week, the absence will remain unauthorised.
- If a phone call is received stating that a child is sick, medical evidence may be required;
 - if the child has had a high number of illness marks,
 - if the school is not satisfied that the illness is genuine,
 - if the illness is prolonged
 - if the illness does not correspond with the number of days taken.

Guidance from the NHS and the school nurse may also be sought in some cases.

2.6 Absences may be authorised in the following circumstances:

- where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend and medical evidence is provided;
- where the pupil has a medical appointment and evidence of this appointment is received (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards - or send him/her to school beforehand);
- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a license has been granted by the Local Authority,
- in other exceptional circumstances for a very limited period. This would be at the discretion of the attendance lead.
- If leave of absence has been authorised by the headteacher

Medical evidence could be provided in the form of appointment cards, copies of prescribed medication labels, letters from doctors/specialists.

2.7 Approved Educational Activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.8 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.

The Attendance Manager will ensure office staff are trained in the importance of good attendance and in the procedures that need to be carried out.

3. Leave of Absence

A request for Leave of Absence must be completed using the official Leave of Absence request form at least six weeks prior to the absence being taken. One form must be completed for each individual child. The Attendance manager can only authorise leave if it meets the following criteria:

- A parent in the armed forces is returning from an overseas placement.
- Cultural absences for families returning to their homeland for religious festivals.
- Wedding of immediate family member. Absence would only be authorised for the ceremony and for the journey to and from the ceremony (maximum of three days in total)
- There are extreme family circumstances that may necessitate a holiday in term time for the benefit of the whole family.

3.1 Second and subsequent unauthorised, term-time leave of absence may be referred to the Local Authority for legal action. In these cases, the Educational Welfare Officer will be asked to investigate and will decide with the school, what the best course of action should be.

4. Collection and analysis of data

4.1 The Attendance Leader and Attendance Manager will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

4.2 Attendance is monitored by whole school, year group and classroom group. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

4.3 The attendance manager will ensure accurate attendance returns are made to the DfES within the stipulated time frame, each half term

4.4 The attendance manager will ensure all documents required will be submitted to the LEA in relation to issuing Fixed Penalty Notices and information required for court proceedings.

5. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

5.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Woods Loke School and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in tutor groups. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

5.2 First-day calling

We use a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupil who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.

5.3 School Strategies to Tackle Absence

The Attendance Leader is responsible for the school management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that we intervene in non-attendance at an early stage.

Parents may be written to if their child's attendance falls below 95%. The letter will explain the importance of good attendance and explain the next steps should their attendance not improve. During the Autumn term this letter will be an information letter explaining what will happen if attendance continues at that level. If attendance remains below 95% at the end of this term, a letter will be sent informing parents that medical evidence will be required in order for all future absences to be authorised.

5.4 Parent Awareness

Attendance is available for parents to see on their child's Arbor account. This is a live document, updating daily.

5.5 Referral to other Agencies

If a child is failing to attend school at all, a Child Missing Education (CME) referral will be made to the Local Education Authority.

5.6 Fixed Penalty Notices

Pupils who are absent for six unauthorised sessions within an academic year, and whose attendance is below 96% (over the previous 12 month period) may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) referral. Each parent will be issued with a £60 fixed penalty. The attendance manager will ensure these FPN are received by the LEA within 15 days of the absence being taken.

If parents take their child on holiday for more than 10 days in an academic year, a penalty notice will be issued to each parent with parental responsibility, regardless of their attendance.

5.7 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked **absent for the whole session** (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, bad traffic, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. (See para. 4.4).

If a pupil receives more than 5 late marks in any one academic year, the parent may be requested to meet with the headteacher.

- 5.8 Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes will be written to, explaining the impact of this.
- 5.9 For health and safety reasons it is important that staff know who is in the building. Pupils arriving late must report to the school office. They should be brought to the office by their responsible adult (except pupils in year 5 and 6 who can walk alone) and the reason given for their lateness. It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure. They will then sign their child in on the designated signing in cards.
- 5.10 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), are signed out at the school office.

6. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Woods Loke School.

We expect parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend school when expected;
- 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.

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify the school office on each day of absence by calling our absence line.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;

- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Woods Loke School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

7. Reward Systems

Individual certificates and attendance badges are awarded each term to pupils who achieve 100% attendance. Certificates and a small prize are presented to pupils who attain 100% attendance in an academic year.

8. Governors' responsibilities

The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. The attendance Governor will arrange to meet with the attendance manager on a regular basis to discuss the school's attendance and consider any current trends which are impacting on the schools attendance.

The Attendance Governor will attend attendance meetings if requested by the school. They may also be asked to attend meetings with parents, if the parent is not satisfied with the Attendance Manager and Attendance Leads decision relating to whether an absence should be authorised.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - A Guide for Parents

Appendix 2 - Leave of Absence form

This policy was adopted by the Governors on:

Signed:

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Headteacher

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Chair of Governors

Date of next review: October 2023

Appendix 1 - A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at **8.55am** and the afternoon register at **1.00pm**

2. What happens if my child is late?

If your child arrives between **8.55am** and **9.10am** he/she will be marked **late**

If your child arrives after **9.10am** or **1.15pm** he/she will be marked as **absent**

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office, and sign their child's late card. If a pupil is late on three or more occasions a meeting will be arranged with a member of staff to discuss reasons/ difficulties for lateness.

3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on each day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. However, we need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment
(Please make routine appointments after school or during the Holidays)
- Family bereavement
- If a holiday has been agreed prior to going, by the attendance lead

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters etc.

6. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas to visit relatives. What should I do?

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. Contact the school office as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SAT's. You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the attendance leader then approves the visit, the school will set work for your child to complete while away.

8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Your child will bring home a school diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child.

9. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher, or Head of Key Stage, immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons - difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the