Woodthorpe Community Primary School
Attendance Policy

Contents

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Learning together we will…

Understand and accept the rights and responsibilities of being citizens of the future

Be able to adapt to new challenges and offer enterprising solutions

Be active contributors to the wider community

Be ambitious and take pride in our achievements

Achieve high standards in all areas of the curriculum

Develop ourselves as courageous, self motivated, independent and collaborative learners

Value and care for others in the local community and the wider world

Achieve our full potential as well rounded individuals

We will discover, value and enjoy our diverse society

…Learning together

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by **8.45am** or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Please contact main reception to report this.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Please inform the admin team at the Main Reception Area as soon as possible.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Should punctuality be a concern, parents will be provided with their child's minutes late report and invited to discuss the issue with a member of the schools Attendance team.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Parents will receive:

- A text message requesting them to contact school to explain absence
- A phone call should a text not be acted on by parents
- A home visit, should school feel that there is a safeguarding need

3.6 Reporting to parents

All parents will receive their child's attendance record on a termly basis.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances. Department for Education guidance, effective from 1 September 2013 clearly states that Headteachers may authorise leave in term time in exceptional circumstances only.

- There is no entitlement to take a holiday in term time
- Exceptional circumstances are defined as unique or once-in a life time opportunities, and may include family circumstances
- The opportunity for a discounted holiday will not constitute exceptional circumstances
- Parents/carers must request leave, at least 20 days in advance where possible, and the Headteacher must consider the request and respond in writing within 10 days. The Headteacher may arrange a meeting to discuss an application further before making a decision and will take into account other factors such as school attendance
- Requests for term time leave from school must include specific start and end dates
- Parents/carers wishing to take a pupil out of school for a holiday are be actively discouraged
- If an unauthorised holiday is taken, consideration may be given by the Local Authority to the issuing of a Penalty Notice
- Children who do not return to school by the agreed return date may be at risk of losing their place at the school

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Absence will not normally be authorised if:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The school is not satisfied with an explanation offered
- The pupil is staying home to look after family members or the home
- The pupil is absent on special occasions e.g. a birthday
- The pupil is absent on a family holiday for longer than agreed by the Headteacher
- The pupil is absent on a family holiday not agreed by the Head Teacher
- The pupil is absent unnecessarily e.g. for shopping

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Woodthorpe Community Primary School has a variety of incentives that promote good attendance. Primarily we ensure that the curriculum is exciting and engaging, ensuring that the children are excited about attending school. Other strategies include:

- A weekly raffle held on a Monday
- Winning class receive a sticker for their chart. A full chart = special class lunch
- Visual displays throughout the school
- Attendance letters promoting attendance on a termly basis
- The recognition and rewarding of improved attendance

6. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If a pupil's absence goes un-reported, school with contact parents via text message (see 3.5)

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will:

- Invite the parents in to talk through ways in which we can support good attendance
- Organise a School Attendance Panel meeting with a member of the Governing Body and Local Authority Officer responsible for attendance
- Where all support has been exhausted school will refer to the Local Authority for advice, this may include Penalty Notice Warning, Fine or Imprisonment

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Attendance Data is stored via SIMs and is used in the following ways:

- Track a child's attendance in order to spot the need for early intervention; children whose attendance is beginning to drop below the schools attendance target of 96% and who are at risk of becoming persistent absentee, persistent absentee's

- Children who are persistently late

- To report to the Governing Body the over-all attendance and the number of Persistent Absentees.

For those children and families who are causing concern, they will be contacted by the school and the procedures highlighted above will be followed.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The governors responsible for attendance (Grant Walker/ Tracey Twelvetrees) and the Deputy Headteacher will meet regularly. A member of the Governing Body will also sit on School Attendance Panels, feeding back the outcomes of these to the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

Code	Definition	Scenario
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day