



Woodbrook Vale School Policy Document

Attendance Policy

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Whole School Attendance Policy

1 Overview

This policy has been produced in accordance with the requirements of the 'Working Together to Improve Schools Attendance' (September 2022) (DfE) guidance; the Education Act and education regulations for pupil registration in England (2016). The policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

- 1.1 Woodbrook Vale School has very high expectations regarding attendance. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for our students and recognise 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 regularly and punctually will students be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High achievement depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community, students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school Trustees have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance. The purpose of this policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.3 The policy has been drawn up based on current government and Local Authority guidance and Statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all stakeholders know of the policy and have access to it.
- 1.4 We will maintain an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledge the efforts of students to improve their own attendance and timekeeping and challenges students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- 1.5 We will communicate, in a timely manner, with students, parents and appropriate external agencies to provide information and guidance in order to promote high levels of attendance and punctuality.

2 School's Roles and Responsibilities

All staff at Woodbrook Vale School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our students 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.

The school will use Local Authority guidance regarding the authorisation of term time absences and the proposed use of Fixed Penalty notices, as a strategy to address absence.

The Deputy Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Attendance Officer will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team. Data will be made regularly available, through Go4Schools and our Data Warehouse, to all staff, students and parents/carers. The Board of Trustees will be made fully aware of attendance data and targets. The Attendance Officer will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that interventions are in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.1 The Governing Board

Is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- The Board of Trustees 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 young people who are students at the school.

2.2 The Headteacher

Is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

2.3 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

Is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Sarah Anderson and can be contacted via 01509 557560.

2.4 The Attendance Officer

Is responsible for:

- Checking registers and inputting absence codes on Go4Schools.
- Providing regular attendance updates to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Deputy Headteacher responsible for attendance and the Headteacher.
- Manage the sanctions and oversee detentions for lateness.
- Working with the Deputy Headteacher to tackle persistent absence.
- Completing Child Missing Education (CME) and Pupils Missing Education (PME) returns.
- Overseeing Child Missing Education (CME) and Child Medical Needs (CMN) referrals.
- Meeting with parents and students to discuss attendance.
- Liaising with the Local Authority regarding parent contracts and legal sanctions/

The attendance officer is Sue Moreton and can be contacted via 01509 557560 option 2.

2.5 Class Teachers, Form Tutors and Heads of Year

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on Go4Schools.

Heads of Year will work with the attendance officer to oversee attendance concerns.

2.6 School Administrative staff

School administrative staff will:

Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and forward to the attendance officer.

Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

2.7 Parents/Carers

The Law.

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states: “The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause [the student] to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- to his/her age, ability and aptitude and
- to any special needs they may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”

(Note: for educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child).

Parents should:

Ensure their children arrive at school on time dressed in the correct uniform and with the correct equipment each day.

Work in partnership with the school, for example attending parent meetings and consultations and adhering to the home-school agreement.

Contact the school without delay if their child is absent or late.

Provide the school with more than one emergency contact for their child.

Ensure that, where possible appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Contact the school if they are concerned about any aspects of their children’s school lives;

Woodbrook Vale School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

2.8 Students

- All students should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their Form Tutor, Head of Year or the Attendance Officer.
- Students should attend school every day on time
- Students should attend every timetabled session on time and ready to learn.
- Students have a responsibility for reporting to the Student Office if they arrive late to school.

3. Categorising and Recording Absence

Registration. The school is required by law to mark the attendance register twice each day; The morning register will be completed promptly at 8.30am by the form tutor and at 1.20pm by the period 5 subject teacher. The registers will close at 8.45 am and 1.25pm. Any student arriving after the closing of the registers will receive an unauthorised late mark. Any child arriving late, but before the closing of the register will be marked as late. It is the expectation of the school that subject teachers’ complete registers using Go4Schools accurately and within five minutes in all other lessons.

Punctuality. Students marked as late, where no explanation has been received from home, will receive a stage 3 late break time detention the same day. Three late marks will result in a stage 4 after school detention supervised by a member of staff.

- 3.1** A mark will be made in respect of each child following the close of the registers. Any child who is not present will be coded as unauthorised unless permission has been given for this absence in advance, or the reason of absence is given and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later date, the register will be amended with the appropriate code at that time.
- 3.2** Woodbrook Vale School recognises the clear links between attendance and achievement and that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child’s education as authorised absence in potentially sending a message that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable.

- 3.3** If absence is frequent or continuous, (with the exception of a long-term illness supported by appropriate medical evidence) the Attendance Officer and/or-Deputy Headteacher will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note of explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.
- 3.4** It is the parent/carers responsibility to notify the school of all student absence and lateness. Parents are expected to telephone the attendance line or email the designated email address for attendance via the school website as soon as possible to inform the school if a child will be absent or late. This should happen on each day that this applies. Students will be categorised as late if they have not arrived to registration by 8.35am. Students arriving after 8.35am must report to the Attendance Office to sign into school. If they fail to do so they will be marked as absent.
- 3.5** The Attendance Officer will monitor lateness and punctuality. Parents will be informed of lateness by a text message. Patterns of lateness will be monitored and appropriate sanctions will be applied in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. Persistent lateness will be referred to the Local Authority via the Inclusion Team. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- 4. The School's Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Attendance**
- 4.1** Parents/carers are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to achievement.
- 4.2** The attendance officer will co-ordinate checking of registers against the telephone messages/emails received in line with safeguarding procedures and in order for fire sheets to be generated.
- 4.3 Unplanned Absence/Illness**
 The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on each day of an unplanned absence by 8.20am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school attendance line: 01509 557560 Option 2 or emailing wbvattendance@wbvs.co.uk .
 We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the student's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.
- 4.4 Planned Absence**
 Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.
 We do however, encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
 The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.
- 4.5** It is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact the school on each day of absence. If this does not happen, a morning text will be sent to the first contact for that student to establish a reason for the absence. A second text will be sent if a reply has not been received by the afternoon. If we are concerned about the absence, we may contact other primary contacts.

4.6 Woodbrook Vale School has procedures in place to deal with unexplained absences. If there has been no contact with parents for an unexplained absence for a third consecutive day, the Attendance Officer may complete a home visit or contact Leicestershire Police to request a Safe and Well Check.

4.7 If absences persist and attendance falls below 95% a letter may be sent to the parent/carer expressing concern and showing a pattern of absences if applicable. If attendance continues to decrease and attendance falls below 92% a second letter may be sent out requesting medical evidence for future absences.

Where absence is equivalent to 10 consecutive days a Child Missing Education referral may be made.

The attendance officer will always discuss cases with the Deputy Headteacher prior to letters being sent. A written record will be made when any telephone call is made about attendance.

4.8 Penalty Notices/Prosecution for Non-School Attendance.

As a school we work alongside the Local Authority and the Local Authority Code of Conduct for using Penalty Notices. The Local Authority will consider the issue of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in those cases where a student's attendance has fallen below the level determined as the trigger for legal intervention and it is considered likely that the issue of such a notice will bring about an improvement in attendance.

4.9 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Text and call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may complete a self and well check or contact any external agencies considered appropriate.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

5. Leave of Absence

- 5.1.** The Government has issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding leave of absence. Therefore, non-attendance (however short or infrequent) is treated seriously. It is the policy of the school to only sanction non-attendance during term time in exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- 5.2.** Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being coded as unauthorised. Any request for leave must demonstrate that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher may ask for evidence of this. If leave of absence is refused but the student is absent during the period of time requested, the absence will be unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Exceptional circumstances are defined very narrowly. The Department for Education has made it clear that certain events (e.g. birthdays) will not normally be considered as an exceptional circumstance. Absence may be authorised in the following examples of exceptional circumstances:

- A student is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority and signed by the Headteacher.
- A student is involved in an exceptional special occasion. The individual circumstances of the particular case and the student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered. This will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- Where the school is satisfied that the student is too ill to attend
- Where the student has a medical appointment that cannot be made outside of school hours and is supported by relevant documentation.
- Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. Prior permission must be sought by the parent from the Headteacher.
- The student is of no fixed abode, his/her parents are engaged in a trade which require him/her to travel, the student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months.
- In other exceptional circumstances, such as a family bereavement. In these situations' authorisation of absence will be time limited.

5.3. Valid Reasons for Authorised Absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments where appointment cards/letters are provided.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision
- Study leave.

5.4. Unauthorised absence

Request for leave of absence will usually remain unauthorised if:

- there is persistent/sporadic absence and attendance falls below 92%.
- no explanation has been given by the parent/carer.
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation.
- the student is absent for unexceptional reasons such as a birthday/anniversary / term-time holiday.

5.5. Medical appointments during school time

A letter/appointment card/hospital letter must be provided for the attention of the Attendance Officer prior to a medical appointment during the school day. If appointments have to be made during the day students should, where possible, always come into school before and after the appointment. Students will always be provided with a sign out slip and must sign out at the Student Office when they leave for the appointment.

5.6. Request for medical evidence

Where there are concerns regarding a student's absence due to prolonged, sporadic, frequent illness or where there is a concern that absence is not for genuine medical reasons, the school will be justified in requesting medical evidence. Medical evidence is likely to be requested when a student's absence falls below 92%. This can be in the form of a Doctor's appointment card, a prescription box from medicine or a label from medication. In line with Department for Education guidance for supporting medical conditions in school the school may draw up an Individual Healthcare Plan.

Medical evidence can help the school to provide external support for students where long term absence is the result of medical needs. This may result in a referral to the Local Authorities medical needs team. The trigger for this is fifteen consecutive day's absence and usually requires supporting medical evidence from a healthcare professional.

5.7. Leaving the Site during the school day

No student is allowed to leave the site without permission during the school day. If in an exceptional circumstance the parent requires their child to leave the school site they must confirm this in writing and, subject to school approval, assume responsibility for their child during this time. If a student truants from the school site parents will be notified and asked to locate their child. Truancy from school will be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Where a student absconds and there are safeguarding concerns the school will advise the parent/carer to contact the police or, where appropriate, contact the police on the parent/carer's behalf. Where a student is subject to a Child Protection Plan a Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact Social care.

5.8. Approved Educational Activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the Attendance Officer will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register. Where a child is educated off site for example through the Loughborough Inclusion Partnership or via Willowbank Hospital School the provider informs the school on a daily basis so that marks can be recorded accurately.

6. Collection and Analysis of Data

The Attendance Officer will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Senior Leadership Team, parents/carers and governing board.

This data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection. Attendance is monitored by year group and by reason for absence. It is analysed by gender, ethnicity, Special Educational Need, Pupil Premium and if the student is a looked after child.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE (via the Local Authority and SIMS) within the stipulated time frame.

7. Persistent Absence (PA)

A child is defined as persistently absent by the DfE if they are absent for 10 per cent or more of school time. The Attendance Officer will monitor the attendance of persistently absent students. Students with attendance below 92% will be clearly identified and the reasons for their absences addressed using a range of support mechanisms within the school as well as statutory interventions, which may include a Fixed Penalty Notice. A half termly report is submitted to the Local Authority for students who are defined as a 'Pupil Missing Education'.

8. Legal Sanction

The Local Authority 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 student 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.

9. Reviewing the Policy

The school will review this policy on an annual basis.

10. Links with other policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Attendance Codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student 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 student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Student 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 student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Woodbrook Vale Attendance

