



Woodland Primary School
'Learning together'

Attendance Policy

Evidence of intentions and practice - for the information of staff, governors, parents, LA, OFSTED and DfE

Prepared by:
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Approved by:
Finance & Personnel Committee

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WOODLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

1 Rationale

- 1.1 Woodland Primary School recognises that many conditions encourage good attendance. The purpose of this policy is to identify effective working practices and responsibilities which will influence school rates of attendance. As we work hard to raise standards, we need to communicate the premise that we cannot teach children if they are not in school, so this will affect their progress.
- 1.2 Good attendance and punctuality are the responsibility of all parties involved in the school.

2 Aims

- 2.1 Our aim is to make Woodland Primary a school where children want to attend by providing a quality of experience for them to enjoy. Staff in school will work to make children, parents, carers and representatives of outside agencies feel welcome and comfortable, to ensure parents encourage their children to achieve 100% attendance in order to continue to progress, develop, achieve the best results they can and reach their full potential at school.

3 Key Points

- Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school;
- The school expects regular attendance, even when we recognise the problems of individual families and children;
- Lateness is actively discouraged;
- Parents need to accept that the school will not authorise family holidays in term time. Only in exceptional circumstances will the school authorise a holiday. All requests for holidays must be made in writing to the Headteacher.
- Even where absence is authorised, the school will be alert to emerging patterns of absence which may seriously disrupt continuity of learning;
- The school works closely with our Education Welfare Officer, our Attendance Officer and the school's Emotional and Well-being team to ensure that all pupils have good attendance and punctuality.
- Parents need to accept the school does not have to authorise any absence if it does not feel it should be.
- The school uses many reward and recognition techniques and systems to encourage a high level of attendance throughout the school.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Body will:

- Be vigilant in the monitoring of attendance statistics and understand how they influence school improvement planning;
- Ensure that the senior leadership team of the school monitors attendance figures and employs a range of strategies which will influence improved attendance;
- Make clear to parents the impact of good attendance on achievement;

4.2 The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Monitor attendance statistics and establish strategies which will have a positive influence on raising standards;
- Work with children/families where attendance/punctuality is a problem to offer or provide support where necessary;
- Reward children for high levels of attendance;
- Include attendance updates in the weekly newsletter
- Update the attendance display weekly in praise assembly

4.3 Class Teachers will:

- Be aware of punctuality/attendance patterns of children in their classes and bring issues to the attention of the Headteacher or Attendance Officer;
- Be sensitive where there may be family issues which influence attendance at school;
- Record attendance and absence as laid down in this policy
- Reward children for high levels of attendance;
- Encourage Teaching Assistants to support assigned individual to achieve better attendance

4.4 The Emotional and Well-being Team will:

- Work with children and families with an attendance problem
- Support children who find coming to school or arriving at school on time difficult

4.5 The Attendance Officer will:

- Monitor attendance on a weekly, half termly, termly and annual basis.
- Communicate with parents highlighting low attendance or poor punctuality via phone, meetings or letters.
- Offer support to parents and children through school where needed
- Encourage parents to inform school on first day of absence
- Make first day absence calls to those that have not contacted school after text message sent
- Liaise with the Education Welfare Service to review attendance patterns and take action via letters, home visits or court proceedings
- Work with the community and outside services to support parents where help is needed
- Build strong relationships with parents and children in the school
- Spend time near the cloakrooms on a morning and be there for any parents to talk to if they are having attendance issues
- Ensure telephone numbers are up to date in order for the school to be able to contact parents and maintain good communication
- Have a sympathetic and understanding approach to problems that may affect attendance
- Ensure all morning and afternoon registers are filled in correctly and amending where needed

- Record on SIMS reasons for absences where known
- Scan and attach all attendance letters, medical evidence and appointment letters to individual students
- Liaise with Child Protection Officer when concerns arise
- Keep Headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants up to date with attendance issues
- Encourage parents to use the schools breakfast club to ensure better punctuality
- Ensure FS1 pupils' part time sessions are recorded on SIMS correctly

4.6 **Parents will:**

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Understand the importance of attendance and punctuality;
- Inform the school as soon as they can when a child is absent
- Inform the school as soon as they can when a child has an appointment, what time their child will be collected/returned and provide evidence of the appointment where possible.
- Respond to requests from the Headteacher to discuss issues regarding attendance or punctuality
- Avoid appointments during school hours
- Provide medical evidence when requested by the school

4.7 **Children will:**

- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Be personally organised so that they are ready for the beginning of the school session.
- Speak to the Attendance Officer, member of the Emotional and Wellbeing Team, Teacher or Teaching Assistant about any concerns they have regarding their attendance.

5 **Working Practices**

5.1 **Registration**

Correct and consistent registration of attendance is important for monitoring and health and safety reasons. It enables us to know which children are in school should the building need to be evacuated. It also provides information about attendance and punctuality patterns.

- 5.2 Registration will take place as soon as possible at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers will be done on SIMS in the classrooms and then saved so the Attendance Officer can follow up absences.
- 5.3 Registers will close 30 minutes after the start of the session. Children who arrive after registration has begun will have their lateness registered at the school office as they come into school. Children who arrive after registers are closed will be registered by the Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer will contact parents who have not notified the school of children's absence on the first day of absence to ascertain a reason for absence and also to remind parents of their responsibility to inform the school.
- 5.4 The symbols listed in Appendix A must be used for marking attendance and absence. Registers must be kept accurately as they may be used in evidence in court.

5.5 **Dealing with Pupil Absence**

Correct registration of pupil absence is important for monitoring and safety purposes. Messages taken regarding absence must be recorded onto SIMS immediately. Any unexplained absences will be followed up in the same day and reasons for absence sought.

- 5.6 Attendance and absence is entered onto the Attendance Module of SIMS. Accurate figures can be compiled regarding the absence of individuals or groups of children within long and short periods of time.
- 5.7 The Headteacher monitors attendance / absence weekly to provide an overview, half-termly and termly. Children with intermittent or unexplained absence will be considered for referral. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Service and has regular visits by the EWO who support families struggling with attendance issues. Children with less than 90% attendance at any one time are also considered for referral. Initially this is likely to be pursued with parents informally and improvement monitored.
- 5.8 Specific groups – eg. Travellers, Children in Public Care and Asylum Seekers / Refugees are regarded as vulnerable groups
- 5.9 Parents can be prosecuted under the Education Act of 1993 for failing to ensure their child's attendance at school with the following exceptions:
- The pupil was absent with permission from an authorised person in the school;
 - The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause;
 - The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious group to which the family belongs;
 - A family bereavement requires a child to attend a funeral or associated event;
 - Where a child has been temporarily excluded from school
 - Where a child is being dual-educated offsite

5.10 **Holidays in Term Time**

In accordance with LA guidance these are no longer authorised. Parents will be reminded of this through admission meetings and the school newsletter. Only in exceptional circumstances will the school authorise a holiday. All requests for holidays must be made in writing to the Headteacher. Families taking their children out of school during term time will be asked to reconsider. If children are still taken out of school, despite being encouraged not to, they may receive a fine.

5.11 **Dealing with Pupil Lateness**

School starts at 8.55am. The school doors open at 8.45am to allow children a gradual start to the school day and school gates are locked at 8.55am. Late comers must enter the school through the reception entrance. Children can attend the schools breakfast club which starts at 8.00am and can register until 8.25am. Children who attend breakfast club will be taken to class at 8.45am.

- 5.12 The Admin Team and Attendance Officer record the lates immediately on SIMS, noting how many minutes late they are, year group and reason given. The parents of pupils who are frequently late are sent a letter on a monthly basis.
- 5.13 Teachers will need to check that when a child has arrived late, they have registered with the Admin Office and mark on their SIMS registers how many minutes late they are.
- 5.14. Where pupils arrive after registers close at 9.25am and no reasonable explanation is given, they will be marked as an unauthorised absence for that session. Reasons for lateness or absence can be sensitively explored.

6 Rewarding Attendance

6.1 Attendance certificates and prizes are awarded for:

- Perfect attendance and attendance above 96% for a whole term. Children will receive a certificate and also receive a reward.
- Perfect attendance for a whole year. These children will receive a certificate and also a reward of greater value than the termly reward.
- 96+% attendance for a whole year. Children will receive a certificate and a reward.
- Letters sent out monthly to every child achieving 100% attendance
- £20 monthly prize to the class with the best attendance
- Class teachers send a certificate home on a Friday for all children that have achieved 100% attendance that week.
- Attendance figures reported to parents weekly in the school's newsletter

7 Communications

7.1 Communications with parents/carers must always be handled sensitively, whether by letter or face to face. If a problem is identified and cannot be resolved by the Attendance Officer, Emotional and Well-being Officer or Education Welfare Officer, the Headteacher will decide which course of action to take.

8 Monitoring & Evaluation of the Policy

8.1 This policy was written with reference to the current statutory regulations regarding attendance at school. It has been approved by the Governing Body and will be reviewed annually.