Woodlands Primary School and Nursery

Attendance Policy

Date of policy creation:	October 2023
	Y.Crilly/J.Duncombe
Date of policy review:	October 2025
	(or sooner should guidance change)

Our overall attendance for the academic year Sept 2022-July 2023 was 94%

Aims

All staff at Woodlands are committed to providing a full, effective educational experience for all pupils. To ensure that all of our children receive a high quality education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As such, we consistently strive to ensure high attendance levels for all pupils. We support children and their families; identifying barriers to attendance and punctuality and addressing these as rapidly as possible. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and ensure that we establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised to address any concern about attendance and provide support where needed. Our school actively promotes and encourages 100 % attendance for all our pupils.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through a whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance. This is done by:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law,
- Completing registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session,
- Clearly communicating to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence,
- Rewarding good and improved attendance of all pupils (attendance is celebrated and rewarded weekly in classes and on our school Newsletter),
- Ensuring regular evaluation of attendance procedures and the impact of interventions to reduce PA, by SLT, our school EWO and the school governors,
- Acting swiftly to address any patterns of absence or to prevent decline in specific families attendance
- Ensuring that children who have been absent are able to catch up on missed learning, once they return to school. Children are also able to access Remote Education (where appropriate/applicable),
- Clearly communicate the range of exciting incentives to promote good attendance and punctuality and celebrate improved attendance rates.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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:

❯ Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
❯ Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
❯ Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
❯ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
❯ 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.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

Our attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session, data is stored on BROMCOM. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.20am when the register will close. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.30pm. 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 be made on BROMCOM and show:

> The amended entry, the date on which the amendment was made, the name of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

> For pupils of compulsory school age - whether the absence is authorised or not
> The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
> The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff or Messaging our attendance officer using Class DOJO (see also section 7). We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless a second school attendance letter (SAL2) has been sent to the parent. If a SAL2 has been sent, the school will ask the pupil'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.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and a copy of the appointment has been seen by a member of the office staff. Parents should notify the school office at least a day before and bring a copy of the appointment if possible. However, we encourage parents/carers 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. The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late (between 8.50 and 9.00am) will be greeted on the gate by school staff. The child will receive the following attendance codes:-

> Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the L code (between 8.50am and 9.20am.)
> After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the U code (after 9.20am.)
  At the end of each half term, punctuality percentages will be reviewed by the attendance officer and inclusion team. Parents will receive either letters or a phone call depending on how many times their child has been late to school.

Following up unexplained absence

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence we will:

- follow 'First day contact' procedures and contact the parent by telephone/text message. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will send a dojo message or occasionally email the parent/carer.
- 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 the day after the day of absence.

- 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, on the second day without contact, our attendance officer will consider undertaking a home visit in line with our attendance procedure, particularly if a child has been identified as persistently absent.
- A home visit would be done on the third day if we have not been contacted by the parent/carer. to conduct a home visit if no response is received after 3 days of absence (this could be sooner depending on circumstance), and consider a referral to the local authority attendance team or contact 'Family Connect', (T&W Policy is 5 days but as a school we believe it is necessary to make authority aware sooner).
- If a child is not at school for 10 or more school days, school will complete a CME (Child Missing Education) form and refer the matter to the CME team at Telford and Wrekin Council. There may be several different reasons for this such as moving out of the area.
- invite the parents into school for an 'Attendance Concern Meeting' (ACM) after a maximum of 10 days absence, unless other action is planned. This meeting should include a senior member of staff, parent, pupil and the EWO. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance,
- Help the pupil's re-integration where a pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence then an Individual Reintegration Programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible
- Contact Family Connect 01952 385385 for further guidance on available support.

In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.

Reporting to parents/carers

Parents/carers will be advised when their child's attendance falls below 90%. This will be identified at an attendance review meeting which will be held every three weeks. These meetings will be held with Mrs Fisher, Mrs Craven and Miss Ballyn (school admin staff). At the end of each term parents will receive a letter which the children will take home informing them of their child's attendance rate (>95%, between 90% and 95% and <90%.)

The school will inform all parents about their child's attendance and absence levels on an annual basis in their child's end of term report.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for leave in term-time

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion (under the guidance of the Local Authority), including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for leave in term time individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least three weeks before the absence, and submitted on an absence request form, which are available from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
> 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

Legal sanctions

If a child's absence remains under 90% and the school has sent school attendance letters and met with the parents/carers, the school may refer the parent to the Local Authority. The Local Authority then may send a first warning, a final warning or ask the parent/carer to attend an 'Interview Under Caution'. School will have met with the parent/carer at least once before this happens and offer support to them to prevent this from happening. If the parents declines that support, then the school will continue to refer the matter to the Local Authority.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Here

Everyday

Ready

On-time

Attendance is promoted using a variety of strategies at Woodlands. Children are awarded "Attendance Hero" badges, given out to children who have improved their attendance. Attendance percentages are calculated weekly, for the best class attendance in Key stage 1 and Key stage 2. At the end of every week a prize is given to the class with the best attendance, and the best punctuality, in addition to 10 minutes extra play. This is also reported in the weekly newsletter; published on class dojos. Children can view the attendance for their class on a central attendance board.

At the end of each half term, certificates are given to children who have 97% attendance or above. Children with 100% attendance are given a 100% badge. Every week, attendance is monitored with the support of school attendance monitors (year 6 children). Each child with 100% for the week will have a raffle ticket and an attendance sticker. At the end of the school year, one raffle ticket is pulled out from each class jar and one child wins a prize – last year this was a scooter.

The impact of these measures improves attendance, resulting in the number of persistently absent children decreasing. The rewards are reviewed annually.

Attendance monitoring

Our target attendance at school is 96% and we expect children to arrive on time before 8.50am every day. School staff hold attendance review meetings for any child with attendance under 92%. At every review, if the child's attendance has decreased since the last review meeting, appropriate actions are considered. This could include:

- monitoring,
- contacting the parent/carer by phone or letter,
- inviting the parent/carer to a meeting
- or in some cases, referring to the Local Authority.

If the child is on the SEN register, any meetings will be held with the SENDCO present.

School leaders monitor the attendance of the persistently absent children every half term, to ensure that prolonged PA (over 2 years), is targeted. Children that are PA within the current academic year are also targeted to ensure that attendance improves and the number of PA children decreases.

Monitoring attendance

At Woodlands we:

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

Leaders:

➢ Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
➢ Analyse historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
➢ Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
➢ Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
➢ When evaluating success the school will consider whether or not:
  • Attendance has improved
  • Persistent absence has reduced
  • Punctuality has improved
  • Parental response to absences has improved
  • Re-integration plans have been successful
  • The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school, governing body and the local community
  • Pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within school
  • Attendance issues have been included as topics in school assemblies, Life Learning lessons, or as a theme for any other lessons

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

❯ Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
❯ Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
❯ Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance such as completing an early help assessment.
❯ Phone calls may be made and letters sent to parents/carers of persistently absent children.
❯ AT the start of every year, a letter will be sent to the parents/carers of all the persistently absent children from the previous year confirming the attendance for the previous year and inviting them to meet with members of the inclusion team to support them with improving the attendance for the current academic year.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

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 headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:
> Implementation of this policy at the school
> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
> Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
>

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader 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 with the Attendance officer and school admin staff
> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families with the attendance officer

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:
> Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
> Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
> Advising the headteacher when to refer to the Attendance Support Team to consider issuing fixed-penalty notices

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 by 9am.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:
> Make sure their child attends every day on time
> Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return (unless they have sickness or diarrhoea as they will not be able to return to school for 48 hours)
> Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

If a parent is thinking about electively home educating their child, we would suggest they look at the Telford and Wrekin website -
https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20025/school_information/3353/elective_home_education_ehe

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:
Attend school every day on time – gates are open at 8.40am and children are expected to be in school by 8.50am

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
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	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel

	circumstances	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