

Woodrow First School

Attendance Policy

Signed by:	
Reviewed by	Emma Taylor
Head Teacher	Richard Kieran
Chair of Governors	Reg Moore <i>R.F. Moore</i>
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ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The school believes in promoting attendance and punctuality, it is believed children can make the most of the opportunities available to them within school. Attainment is closely linked to 'regular' school attendance. The school is committed to addressing signs of poor attendance and punctuality at the earliest opportunity.

All children on roll are expected to attend every day, when the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. The school does all it can to encourage children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures.

The school has an Education Welfare Officer-Mrs Taylor, her job is to deal with all issues relating to attendance and punctuality within school. Mrs Taylor is available to discuss any issues that children and their parents may have and can be contacted via the school office.

SCHOOL DAY

Nursery	8.45am	to	11.45am	or
	12 noon	to	3.00pm	
Reception	8.45am	to	3.15pm	
KS1 & KS2	8.45am	to	3.15pm	

The most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding place for children to enjoy attending.

Mrs Taylor sends regular communication via telephone, meetings and ScholarPack to promote improvement to attendance.

We will also make the best provision to support those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school. Mrs Taylor has

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access to a number of emergency breakfast club spaces, which are used to help children attend school regularly and punctually. The school will also offer support on a case by case basis, this may mean that we can make reasonable adjustments for a specific amount of time to ensure that children can attend school regularly.

DEFINITIONS

In school, we are responsible for making sure that we keep an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school 'regularly' and on time.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian.

For example, if a child is unwell the parent telephones the school to explain the absence and follows up with a note on the child's return.

Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences reported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised Absences

An absence is classified as 'unauthorised' when a child is away from school without the approval or permission of the school, even if it is with the support of a parent/guardian.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Lateness is also recorded on a daily basis in the class register. Lateness after 9.15am is also recorded as unauthorised. Please be aware that following government guidance from August 2024, these absences will count towards unauthorised sessions that may result in a penalty notice or attendance at magistrates court. If you are having difficulties, please speak to us. There is always something that we can do to help.

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Fines/Penalties

Absence fines charged to parents from August 2024 will rise from £60 to £80, or £160 if not paid within 21 days. These are issued from the local authority.

From the Autumn term 2024, only two fines can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period. Any second notice will automatically be charged at £160.

From September 2024, schools will have to consider a fine if a pupil misses 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

The threshold can be met with “any combination of unauthorised absence”. For example, four sessions in term time plus six instances of arriving late.

The period of 10 weeks can also span “different terms or school years”.

Only two penalty fines can be issued in a three year period. After that time the local authority passes the case to be heard at magistrates court.

WHEN A CHILD IS ABSENT

We ask that when possible, parents inform the school on the first day of a child’s absence before 9.00am to inform us of the reason for absence. The school office and/or Education Welfare Officer will then record the absence in the register for the class teacher.

When a child is absent without explanation, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the Education Welfare Officer, who will usually endeavour to contact a parent or guardian using the contact details that we have on record. If contact cannot be established and no reason is received, then a safe and well visit may be deemed appropriate.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, class teachers will take immediate action by notifying the school office or Education Welfare

Officer. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

On the third day of an absence school will conduct a safe and well check to the child's home address, if we have been unable to make contact to establish the whereabouts of the child. If a child's whereabouts is not established by calling all contacts on record and by visiting the home, then we will contact our partner agencies. For example, the police may be contacted to conduct a safe and well check. The local authority will be notified of children that have not attended school for 10 school days, this will take place for all children where a reason is known or not. We will update the local authority of irregular school attendance, to gain support at a suitable time for the family and prevent CMiE (Children Missing in Education).

Please ensure you inform school of any changes to your contact details (e.g. change of phone number).

When the child returns to school, a note should follow from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical/dental appointment. (We do however ask that where possible, appointments that are not urgent are made at the end of the school day). School requires that appointments made during school time are supported with an appointment card or letter submitted to the school office.

You can contact the school office in person, email or by telephone. Scholar Pack can also be used to report the absence of your child. The school Facebook page is not to be used for attendance issues.

If your child's attendance is classified as 'persistently absent' you will be contacted by the EWO and may be asked to provide supporting medical evidence to confirm your child was 'unfit for school'. The medical evidence may be in the form of an appointment card, prescription or prescribed medicine label.

The school has an attendance panel which consists of the head teacher, parents, EWO, Class teacher and any other involved agency. They meet regularly to discuss how best to support families whose attendance and punctuality is below expected levels (90% and persistently absent) and improvement has not been seen despite support and interventions from the EWO.

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The EWO and SENCO meet every half term to discuss attendance for our pupils. The EWO and SENCO will meet with families where appropriate to offer support to improve attendance.

Parents are advised to refer to:

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

The website gives guidance on what illnesses a child can and can't attend school with.

REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE/HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME (There is no automatic right for any leave of holiday in term time)

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best possible progress in all areas of learning. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special event like a wedding. We expect parents to contact the school as far as possible in advance, but only requests for 'exceptional circumstances' will be granted. Parents/guardians wishing to request a leave of absence child during term time will need to make an appointment with the Headteacher to discuss the request and obtain the necessary form from the school office to be completed and returned.

These requests should be presented to the school at least 4 weeks prior to the date of the leave.

However, we cannot authorise any requests for holiday leave in term time. Holidays must be taken in the 13 weeks, school holidays per year.

A letter will be issued from school informing parents whether their request for leave has been refused or authorised. Penalty notices (fines) may be sought by the EWO on behalf of the Headteacher/School Governors for any unauthorised holiday requests that have not been granted but still taken by a referral to the Local Authorities Education Investigation Service.

If you decide to take your child on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised. Please be aware that these unauthorised absences will count towards the possible issuing of a penalty notice or attendance at magistrates court for three incidents of 10 sessions (5 school days) within a

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three year period. Please note that these 10 days do not have to be consecutive, for example it could be any combination of 5 days unauthorised absence over a 10 week period.

REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

The EWO monitors registers daily.

After consultation with the Headteacher, the EWO will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has a poor attendance record, regardless of whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised. The parent/s will be invited into school to discuss the absences and the EWO will offer support and explore the reasons for the absences.

If the situation does not improve, the school's EWO will consider what steps might be taken to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation. This may result in legal proceedings being commenced by the local authority.

The governors, supported by the local authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The school monitors attendance on a weekly basis as part of its safeguarding agenda. The Governor responsible for Attendance works closely with the Educational Welfare Officer to provide challenge.

It is the responsibility of the Educational Welfare Officer to monitor overall attendance and will report to the Head teacher weekly. The Headteacher will report termly to the governing body who also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors examine information given to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The education welfare officer and the SENCO meet every half term and monitor the attendance of all children with a special educational need, a child in receipt of pupil premium, a looked after child or children that are currently receiving additional support from Children's Services or early help. This information is used to identify children who are at risk of

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persistence absence and work with the family before they become persistently absent. Attendance is discussed at safeguarding reviews.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is a concern about a child's absence, they will discuss this with Mrs Taylor. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardian so the school can provide the support needed.

All staff in school are aware that if a parent informs them that their child is to move school, country or is planning to home educate their child it is important to capture that information immediately at that point in writing. There is a form that is kept in all classrooms and the school office, this is to be completed with the parent at the point of them discussing that their child will be leaving our school.

It is imperative that all staff complete this and forward this to the EWO, so school fulfils its statutory duty of notifying the Local Authority of all children leaving Woodrow First School.

Staff are aware that it is their responsibility as part of safeguarding and preventing CMiE, that this information is passed on immediately to the EWO (appendix B). The information that needs to be obtained includes child's new address, child's new school's name, and the date they will finish at Woodrow First School and the date they will start at the new school.

When home education is planned school needs confirmation, signed and dated that they wish to home educate their child from X date and they no longer wish their child to be on roll at Woodrow First School. The EWO will then notify the Local Authority via the portal to ensure that a child does not become a 'Child Missing In Education'. Parents are encouraged to talk to school before making this decision, so that we can other ways can be explored to support their child and continue to attend Woodrow First School.

Parents receive an annual report of their child's attendance along with their child's school report, through a registration certificate generated from the Scholar Pack system. Attendance will also be discussed at all parents' evenings. The EWO sends out regular communication throughout the school year in the form of letters and registration certificates, when working with specific children who are deemed as persistently absent or who are at imminent risk of becoming so.

The EWO will also make regular calls to parents where attendance has markedly improved. The ScholarPack app can be used by parents to see a current up to date snapshot of their child's current attendance. ScholarPack can be used by both school and parents to communicate about their child's attendance.

The EWO will work with all parents whose child is classed as persistently absent (below 90%). The Education Welfare Officer will communicate with parents to keep them up to date in improvements and deteriorations in attendance and punctuality and work with them to address any issues at the earliest opportunity. Class teachers are aware of which children are Persistently Absent, they will support the child and family on a day to day basis. This will be done by positive feedback when there has been an improvement and communicating at the earliest opportunity when there is a concern.

At Woodrow First School we recognise there are links between poor attendance and the safeguarding of children. The EWO reports to the Local Authority all children joining or leaving us, outside of the normal admission dates. This enables us to work collectively with the Local Authority to prevent children becoming missing in education.

CONCLUSION

This policy highlights the importance of regular attendance and punctuality for all of the pupils at Woodrow First School and Nursery. The school is committed to working towards regular and punctual attendance for all of pupils to ensure that they gain the most out of their time at school.

The school has a robust procedure for identifying, monitoring and supporting attendance and punctuality. To achieve the best attendance levels there is a strong culture of partnership from the Head Teacher, Education Welfare Officer, SENCO, office staff, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, the governing body, parents and pupils of the school

Child is absent



Message to school
required from parents



Message received



Monitor depending on
absence



If 5 days, medical evidence
required.
Prescription/appointment card



In contact regularly to update
absence – both parties.



If 10 days absence – is
notifiable to the Local Authority

Message not received



1st day call



2nd day absence, no contact –
a further call is made



3rd day no contact, a further
call and if no contact other
contacts on list – home visit.



Observations of home, note
left. Lateral checks, other
schools/agencies.



Safe and well check -
Police



Any absence over 10 days if
notifiable to the Local Authority

Education Welfare Service – Guidance for Schools on Term Time Holidays

APPENDIX A

Application for leave of absence for the purposes of an annual family holiday or an extended trip overseas during term time

Part 1- School to complete this section before sending home		
Child(ren)'s name		Class/Form
Level of attendance during last academic year, current academic year		
Child(ren) will /will not * be sitting examinations/SATs * during this year. (* delete as appropriate).		
Other relevant information e.g. out of school learning planned/ presentation day		
Part 2- Parent/Carer to complete		
To: The Head teacher/Chair of Governors of School		
Dates for which leave of absence is requested		
From: (first day of absence)	To: (last day of absence)	Number of School Days:
Holiday destination:		
Please give the reasons which prevent this holiday being taken during a school holiday period. (You may wish to attach a separate letter to support your request)		
Date: Signed (Parent/Carer)		
Part 3 – To be complete by Head teacher (or nominated person)		
Please make an appointment to discuss this with.....		
Leave of absence authorised/ not authorised (delete as appropriate)		
Date: Signed		

Notification from parent of plans for child to leave school

Date

Childs Name

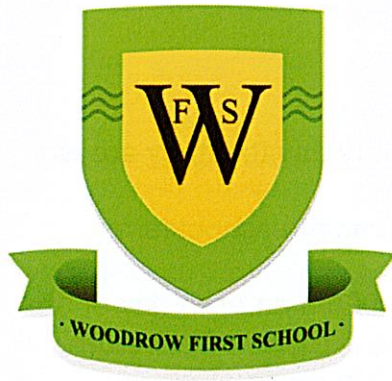
Child's last day at Woodrow First School

Name of child's new school

Are you planning to move address? If so, what will this be

Reasons for child leaving school

Form to be completed between school staff and parent/s. Once form is completed it is to be passed to Mrs Taylor, Attendance Lead. The completion of this form allows us to ensure that all children are safeguarded and are not at risk of missing education.



ATTENDANCE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

At Woodrow First School we want all students to aim for 100% attendance. We set expectations of excellent attendance for all pupils and expect pupils to be in school every day that school is open unless they are too unwell to attend. This is really important so we can give your children the best education we can, and the education that they are entitled to.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and we will work together with parents/carers, pupils and any relevant partners to remove any barriers getting in the way of pupils attending regularly. Pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance will be fully supported by our school, in partnership, where necessary, with any health or external professionals. Promoting and supporting excellent attendance is everybody's business within our school and community.

By providing a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive school where all pupils want to be is important to us. We will work together with you as parents to explore and support any child who is finding it difficult to attend school regularly.

Why is Attending School Regularly So Important?

Excellent attendance is important for pupils to feel part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This supports each pupil's all-round development, mental health, and well-being.

If attendance over the school year is:	...a pupil will miss this many days:	...and this many lessons:
100%	0	0
95%	10	50
90%	19	95
85%	29	145
80%	39	195
75%	49	245
70%	58	290

As a school we expect:

- Your child to be in school every day that they are well enough to do so
- You to not book holidays during the school term.
- You contact school before 9.00am on each day of absence, with the reason for absence and when your child is expected to return. This can be done via phone, email or parent app message.
- Your child returns to school as soon as they are well enough to do so.

As a school we will

- Contact you if we have not heard from you on each day that your child is absent, this can be via phone, parent app or home visits.
- We will use the other contacts that you have supplied, if we are unable to make contact with the parent/carer.

Absence Requests

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take a child out of school during term time for any reason, including a holiday.

Only in very, very exceptional circumstances will absence requests be authorised.

If you feel that, your request meets the very exceptional circumstances criteria, then please make an appointment via the school office to talk this through with Mr Kieran.

We use a penalty notice procedure for reporting term time absences to the Local Authority.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence will be **unauthorised** if your child is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst as parents you can provide explanations for absence, it remains the school's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips, errands
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless in very, very exceptional circumstances as agreed in advance by the school)

- If a pupil is kept away from school longer than has been agreed -any additional absence will be unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in the use of penalty notices or prosecution.

Support for School Attendance

Sometimes your child may not want to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reasons for absence. If your child does not want to attend school, it is never better to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to let your child stay at home. This can give the impression to your child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why your child may not want to attend school so we can support you and your child in the best way possible.

Please speak to Mrs Taylor, who is able to help and to support you and your child.

For pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance we will fully support each pupil to be able to attend as much as possible. Our school will use an individual health plan and will work alongside other relevant professionals such as health colleagues, and yourselves, to best support this.

Our school will always work with you to support your child's attendance; sometimes we may ask you to attend an attendance panel review meeting to look at how we can best support you and your child. We may need to use a parenting contract to look at specific issues that we require your support and action with, which we will review. (Appendix D)

If our school is unable to work in partnership with you as parents, we may refer to the Local Authority. We will only ever do this if everything else has failed. We hope as parents you will work with us to best support your child so this does not need to happen.

If our school has any safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies, as we deem necessary to ensure a child's safety and well-being.

Key Contacts

School Attendance Lead Name: Emma Taylor

Telephone number 01527 527619 Email: attendance@woodrow.worcs.sch.uk

Pastoral Support Lead: Emma Taylor

Telephone number 01527 527619 Email: attendance@woodrow.worcs.sch.uk

Other staff members that might be helpful in supporting attendance

Name: Richard Kieran – Head Teacher

Telephone number 01527 527619 Email: head@woodrow.worcs.sch.uk

Governor for attendance: Ross Crawford

Telephone number 01527 527619 Email: governors@woodrow.worcs.sch.uk

Name: Justine Marshall – Designated Safeguarding Lead

Telephone number 01527 527619 Email: attendance@woodrow.worcs.sch.uk



Attendance Parenting Contract

Date of meeting:

Venue:

Childs name:

Parent/s name:

Address:

School:

Present at meeting:

Current attendance:

Breakdown of codes:

Attendance target:

Timescale for improvement:

Date of review:

Action agreed:

I confirm that this Attendance Action Plan and Parenting Contract has been agreed by all present.

Signed

..... **Parent/Carer**

..... **Child (if appropriate)**

..... **School**

..... **Other Agency**

WHAT THE LAW SAYS

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that “The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/her may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

The Local Authority (LA) aims to work in partnership with parents to improve poor school attendance. However, sometimes parents do not fully cooperate and/or their children(s) school attendance does not improve. In these circumstances the LA may use its legal powers to remind parents to undertake their responsibilities.

Therefore, we are required by law to make you aware of the possible consequences of continued Unauthorised Absence from School.

Education Welfare Service
Worcestershire Children First
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester WR5 2NP

Email: edinvservice@worcestershirechildrenfirst.org.uk

Tel: 01905 846 760



School Attendance

Legal Information for Parents and Carers

Important information for
parents regarding unauthorised
absence from school.



Please Note:

The definition of a parent as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 is:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. Lives with and looks after the child.

The Local Authority may use a number of legal sanctions where parents fail to meet their legal responsibilities regarding their child's school attendance.

Section 23(1) of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007 states that

"Penalty Notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school".

- The amount of the penalty is £60.
- If this is not paid with 21 days, the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice has been issued in error.

Section 444(1) of the Education Act

1996 states that "if you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence".

The court may:

- Fine each parent up to £1,000 per child
- Order payment of the prosecution costs
- Impose a Parenting Order
- Impose an Education Supervision Order

Section 444(1a) Education Act

1996 states that "If in the above circumstances you, the parent, know that your child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fail without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend, you are guilty of an offence".

The court may:

- Fine each parent up to £2,500 per child
- Order payment of the prosecution costs
- Impose a Parenting Order
- Impose an Education Supervision Order
- Sentence parents to a period of imprisonment for up to 3 months

It is expected that parents cooperate with the Local Authority and make sure your child attends school every day it is open, unless there is a good reason for him or her not to attend.