

# **Woodlands Academy of Learning**



## **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

(Reviewed October 2021)

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## Statement of intent

Woodlands Academy of Learning believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance and punctuality is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school or arrive on time.

There is a clear link between attendance and achievement. Children who frequently miss school often fall behind in their work, which could have a detrimental effect on their future prospects and social friendships.

### Woodlands Academy of Learning is committed to:

- Safeguarding children
- Being a welcoming environment with staff dedicated to help the children achieve the best they can.
- Making attendance and punctuality a priority for pupils, parents, staff and Governors with everyone knowing how to fulfil their part in the process.
- Rewarding pupils with excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Star charts for good punctuality, uniform and attendance.
- Weekly whole class certificates.
- Challenging unsatisfactory reasons for all absences.
- Focussing on reducing persistent absence (below 90%) and unauthorised absence.
- Providing support and work in partnership with parents to improve attendance
- Using multi-agency partnerships where necessary to address the needs of children with irregular attendance or poor punctuality.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Have due regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'

Pupils annual attendance = 190 days (380 sessions)

### Attendance %

Attendance	100%	98% +	96% - 97.99%	93% - 95.99%	92.99% and Below
	PERFECT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	CONCERN

### Punctuality

Number of Late's	0	1	2 - 4	5 - 8	8+
	PERFECT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	CONCERN

## **1. Legal framework**

- 1.1. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and are at risk of fines or even prosecution should their children have poor attendance.
- 1.2. The law requires all schools to have an attendance register

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 2.1. The Trustee board has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedures of Woodlands Academy of Learning.
- 2.2. The Trustee board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 2.3. The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedures.
- 2.4. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for following the Attendance and Punctuality Policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- 2.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- 2.6. The class teacher is responsible for ensuring their register is maintained accurately in line with legal requirements.
- 2.7. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, must ensure that they communicate any known reasons for poor punctuality or absence to the Attendance Lead at the earliest opportunity, this will avoid unnecessary parental/family contact causing them any undue concern.
- 2.8. Teachers will report any attendance concerns or emerging patterns on CPOMs
- 2.9. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child.
- 2.10. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.
- 2.11. There are a number of staff involved in the attendance team including, the Attendance Lead, Safeguarding Staff, Headteacher, Deputy Head, Phase Leaders and our external Attendance Support Officer.

### 3. Definitions

3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- **“Parent”** as:
  - All natural parents, whether they are married or not,
  - Any person who has parental responsibility for a child,
  - Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child,
  - The local authority and school will decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.
- **“Absence”** as:
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Not attending school for any reason.
- An **“authorised absence”** as:
  - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
  - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
  - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An **“unauthorised absence”** as:
  - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
  - Absences which have never been properly explained.
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
  - Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
  - Leaving school without prior approval during the day.
- **“Persistent absenteeism”** as:
  - Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year **for any reason**.

### 4. Parent/Pupil Expectations

- 4.1. Parents have a legal duty to ensure pupils attend school every day and arrive on time and to keep their attendance above, 96.5% throughout the year.
- 4.2. Pupils can come into school from 8.40am each morning and they are expected to be in class and ready for learning by 8.55am.

## **5. Absence procedures**

- 5.1. The school has a legal duty to maintain an attendance register and has a safeguarding duty to ensure they know the whereabouts of pupils during school hours.
- 5.2. If the school have not been given prior notice, parents are required to contact the school before 9.15am on the first day of their child's absence providing full details and reason for absence.
- 5.3. Parental contact will be required every other day for absences lasting longer than two days unless prior agreement is received.
- 5.4. A text message will be sent reminding parents to contact the school if notification is not received before 9.15am.
- 5.5. A phone call will be made to the parent if there is still no contact following the text message.
- 5.6. A home visit may be made by a member of the Attendance Team to confirm the reason for a child's absence if parents are not contactable by phone or if there are attendance or punctuality concerns that may need to be discussed in person.
- 5.7. Medical evidence may be requested to support any illness being authorised. In the case of persistent absence, (90% or less) or for any child who has previously had attendance concerns medical evidence will be required for all absences due to illness, without medical evidence the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- 5.8. Parents will be informed if a pupil's attendance drops below 90% and if there is no improvement a meeting in school will be arranged with the parents, should attendance continues to remain low the concerns will be passed on to the Educational Welfare Team at the Local Authority who will decide what further action is required.

## **6. Parent & Emergency Contact Information**

- 6.1. Parents are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 6.2. Parents are responsible for updating the school if their details change.

## **7. Lateness**

- 7.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 7.2. The school day starts at 8:55am when morning registration is taken. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.
- 7.3. Pupil arriving after 8:55am will be marked as late (L code).

- 7.4. The morning register closes at 9:30am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence (U Code) if they do not attend school before this time.
- 7.5. After lunch, registers are marked as soon as pupils return to class, the times are different for each year group and registers will be marked between 12:30 and 14:10 d. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom at their year groups allocated lunchtime.
- 7.6. The afternoon registers close 10 minutes after the pupils should be back in class. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- 7.7. Pupils attending after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but this will count as a late mark. (L Code)

## **8. Appointments**

- 8.1. Where possible, parents must attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 8.2. Where this is not possible, prior notification and a copy of appointment letter must be sent into school for the attention of the Attendance Lead.
- 8.3. Pupils will need to attend school before and after the appointment.
- 8.4. Appointments without evidence will be monitored closely and the attendance mark registered will be considered on an individual basis and allocated at the attendance team's discretion.

## **9. Term-Time Absence**

- 9.1. At Woodlands Academy of Learning our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the restrictions on term time absence.
- 9.2. The headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 9.3. The headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in extreme, exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 9.4. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 9.5. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
  - Immediately before and during assessment periods
  - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
  - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already below 90% for any reason
- 9.6. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

- 9.7. Parents may also be subject to penalty fines should their child's attendance be considered as irregular attendance.

## **10. Religious Observances**

- 10.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- 10.2. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

## **11. Young carers**

- 11.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- 11.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- 11.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

## **12. Missing children**

- 12.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day.
- 12.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:
- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
  - The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
  - A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
  - The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All Rooms
    - All toilets
    - Any outbuildings
    - The school grounds
  - Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.

- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
  - If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, then the police will be contacted.
  - The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- 12.3. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any special educational needs and disabilities, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 12.4. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- 12.5. The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 12.6. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- 12.7. The headteacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 12.8. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behavioural Policy.
- 12.9. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

### **13. Monitoring and review**

- 13.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 13.2. Woodlands Academy of Learning attendance target is 96.5%.
- 13.3. This policy is reviewed every three years or as required by the attendance team and approved by the trustee board, the next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2024.
- 13.4. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

## **Attendance Monitoring Procedures**

Woodlands Academy of Learning has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance and punctuality meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance and punctuality falls below the standard:

### **Daily**

- 'N' codes are recorded by Teachers/TA's and the Attendance Lead will update with the appropriate code daily and record details of the absence where known.
- Absence data is scrutinised daily and appropriate action is taken:
  - Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil where an absence reason is not reported, additional contact will be made every other day for absences longer than 2 days. (Unless agreed at initial contact)
  - Where contact has not been made and there is a concern, or if a pupil has poor attendance a home visit by the external Attendance Support Officer may be requested on the first day of absence.
  - A home visit will also be requested for any pupil who is absent for 3 days with no contact or reason received.
  - Medical evidence may be requested to support any illness being authorised. In the case of persistent absence, (90% or less) or for any child who has previously had attendance concerns medical evidence will be required for all absences due to illness, without medical evidence the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- General attendance information will be recorded on Progresso, however, when there are concerns, letters sent or home visits, the information will be recorded on CPOMs

### **Weekly**

- Pupils at 90% or below are reviewed weekly by the Attendance Lead and appropriate action will be taken (e.g. Letters home, meeting invites, LA referrals – there will be a minimum of two weeks between each stage) actions will be recorded on CPOMs
- A weekly watch list of attendance concerns will be shared with the Safeguarding Team who may take additional action.
- Any N codes where the reason not established or excepted after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence. (O Code)
- Absence requests outcomes will be sent to parents

### **Fortnightly**

- Pupils below 93% are reviewed every fortnight by the Attendance Lead and Attendance Support Officer and together they will agree the actions to be taken, decisions on actions will be made on an individual basis, and any known circumstances will be considered. Details will be recorded on CPOMs
- Any unauthorised absences from the last 14 days including unauthorised holidays are referred to the LA

### **Half Termly**

- Letters are sent for pupils who are on trajectory to becoming Persistent Absentees
- Punctuality is reviewed and letters are sent for identified pupils
- Half termly data reports are presented to the headteacher

### **Termly**

- Data report to Headteacher from Attendance Lead to support report for trustees, including:
  - Overall absence compared to same period for the last 2 years
  - Unauthorised absence compared to the same period for the last 2 years
  - Number of referrals to Education Welfare Service during the last term and any details of outcome
- Issue attendance reward certificates
- Organise the termly reward for perfect attendance and punctuality

### **End of Year**

- Data report to Headteacher from Attendance Lead, including:
  - Overall annual attendance
  - Reflection on impact of current procedures and improvement suggestions