

Woodlands Academy of Learning



Attendance & Welfare Support Home Visit Policy

(Updated November 2022)

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Statement of intent

Woodlands Academy of Learning firmly believes that regular attendance is essential to the successful academic development of pupils.

The role of the attendance and welfare officer is crucial to the overall performance of the school. With this in mind, we have established this policy for attendance and welfare officers who make home visits.

A large part of the attendance and welfare officer's time will be spent outside school premises. For this reason, we believe that clear procedures must be in place to avoid misunderstandings or confusion about home visits.

Home visits are a useful way of addressing the problems that lead to poor attendance; however, since the attendance and welfare officer is entering private property, it is important that all parties are made aware of the rules and procedures. Attendance and welfare officers will maintain the highest professional standards at all times.

The attendance and welfare officer for Woodlands Academy of Learning is an external attendance support provider who has a working contract with the academy. When working on behalf of Woodlands the attendance and welfare officer will abide by the academy's policies.

Our overall aim is to develop good working relationships with parents to help improve attendance and punctuality.

A copy of this policy will be made available to parents/carers via the school website.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

This policy is designed to be used in conjunction with other policies such as the following:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance and Absence Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Positive Handling Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate procedures are in place for attendance and welfare officer home visits.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring the attendance and welfare officer has the appropriate training to conduct home visits.
- Ensuring the appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.

The attendance and welfare officer will be responsible for:

- Following this policy at all times.
- Always acting in the best interests of pupils.

3. Personal safety

It is the responsibility of attendance and welfare officers to keep themselves safe at all times. They will avoid any situations that may risk their safety.

Attendance and welfare officers will carry a mobile phone at all times. The number will be recorded and held by the school.

Attendance and welfare officers will 'check in' by calling or emailing the school attendance team following the home visit.

A home visit risk assessment will be conducted by the attendance and welfare officer prior to a home visit. If a particular home visit poses new risks, the risk assessment will be amended before the visit.

Home visit records will include the time and location, along with the name of the pupil.

If an officer feels that they are in immediate danger, they must contact the police.

4. Home visits

Home visits allow the school to learn the underlying reasons behind poor attendance. By opening a dialogue with parents/carers, attendance officers can offer the required support.

If the parents/carers are not present, the attendance and welfare officer should wait no longer than 10 minutes.

Identification cards will be worn at all times. They will be clearly displayed on the front and outside of clothing.

A house should not be entered if the officer feels unsafe. If a visit is cancelled because of concerns over safety, the reason for cancelling the visit must be communicated in writing to the school attendance team.

If there are potentially dangerous animals in the house, the officer will request that they are kept in a separate room. If the parent/carer refuses, or is unable to adhere to this request, the officer will not enter the house.

If concerns are noted during a visit the attendance and welfare officer is requested to communicate with the school attendance team or headteacher immediately, if they feel that 1 child is at immediate risk they should call the police.

If appropriate the attendance and welfare officer may ask to see the child, however we understand that they may be sleeping, and parent have the right to refuse.

5. After the visit

Once a visit has ended, any agreements made between the officer and parents/carers will be recorded and forwarded to the school to be kept in the pupil's record.

Clear and accurate information recording is essential to avoid future confusion, this information will be shared with relevant staff at school via CPOMs.

6. Child protection and safeguarding

Attendance and welfare officers will carry out their work in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy at all times.

Before an attendance officer is appointed, the appropriate background checks must be obtained. This must include an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate and barred list check.

Where required, physical intervention by staff will be enacted in accordance with the Positive Handling Policy. Staff will only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and it will be the minimal force

necessary to prevent injury to another person. Physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

Attendance and welfare officers will report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL or a deputy as soon as possible.

Any allegations made against attendance and welfare officers will be dealt with in accordance with the Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy or Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Any complaints regarding the attendance and welfare officer's conduct or the home visit will be raised in line with the Complaints Procedure Policy.

7. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the attendance team.

The headteacher is responsible for monitoring this policy and procedures and will amend it accordingly following any incidents or concerns.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is Autumn 2023.