



# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Date of last review: March 2016  
Date of next review: March 2018

# Woodsetton School

## Attendance Policy

*March 2016*

*The Woodsetton School has a very successful pupil attendance record. Working in partnership with parents and other agencies the school strives to encourage and achieve a high level of attendance for all pupils.*

### **Principles and Aims of the School:**

Attendance at school is one of the most critical factors affecting the quality of learning that takes place in the classroom and the child's rate of progress.

For pupils with learning difficulties this factor is even more important, as poor retention skills are often an obstacle to pupil progress.

The intention of the school is for all pupils to achieve their maximum possible attendance.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### ***It is the responsibility of the pupils' parents to ensure that:***

- the pupils go to bed at a reasonable hour and have a good night's sleep
- the pupils are awake at a reasonable time in the morning, properly fed, appropriately dressed and on time to get to school
- the pupils are in a reasonable emotional state to make the most of their school day
- the pupils have with them any necessary equipment for school (e.g. P.E. kit, swimming kit, lunch, etc.)
- the pupils are at school at all times
- school is informed if pupils are not attending, and given the reasons.

#### ***It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that:***

- it implements a robust system for monitoring and responding to absences
- it adopts and supports the current EIS Service Level Agreement
- it nominates a School Attendance Leader. (The Deputy Headteacher)
- it provides statutory attendance data to DfE as requested
- parents and pupils are informed of the dates that the school is open
- the pupils are made to feel welcomed and valued at school
- the pupils are motivated to attend school at all times
- the pupils are rewarded appropriately for good attendance
- parents are contacted if their children do not attend and we have not been informed
- attendance is monitored on a regular basis

- parents and carers are informed if the school has concerns about a child's attendance
- the appropriate agencies are informed if attendance becomes a concern
- appropriate support mechanisms are put into place, in conjunction with other agencies, if attendance becomes a concern.

### **Parents:**

The school always tries to work in partnership with parents. If pupils are not in school it is the parents' responsibility to inform the school on the first day of absence. If a pupil is absent, and no message has been received, the school will try to contact the parents to discover the reason as soon as possible.

If there is a specific problem with attendance caused by factors within school, this can usually be resolved quickly and informally between parents and school. If the problem is caused by domestic circumstances the school can assist parents by engaging the support of other agencies (e.g. Education Investigation Service or Social Care).

Parents will be informed termly about their child's current % attendance. A structured range of generic and individual support and intervention strategies will be applied to all children falling below 95%, with a particular focus on children below 90% attendance.

### **Education Investigation Service (EIS):**

The school uses the statutory EIS provision to respond to significant 'Unauthorised' absence concerns. There is a 'tiered' system of interventions, leading up to legal proceedings, to protect the pupil's educational development.

The school also makes use of additional Education Investigation Officer time to support cases where attendance becomes a serious concern but has not yet reached the criteria for statutory Local Authority intervention.

**Attendance below 90%** may result in a referral to the Education Investigation Service and an **Education Investigation Officer may make a home visit.**

### **Registration:**

**(For full details of registration see "*Guidance for Staff 6: Attendance*")**

All pupils are registered on the LA Integris Attendance module system at 9.10 a.m. and 13:00 pm (KS1) and or 13:30 (EYFS/KS2) by their class teacher, applying the current LA/DfE code guidelines.

Pupils are marked late if they arrive more than 10 minutes after these times. Registers are officially closed half an hour after these times and pupils are then marked as 'Unauthorised absence' if they arrive later during the session, unless an acceptable reason is given.

Late arrivals report to the Receptionist and telephone messages indicating that pupils will not be attending are recorded on the Integris 'Absence Messages' log.

### **Attendance Targets:**

The school's aim is to get full attendance from all pupils. Attendance of individuals and classes will, however, be monitored in an attempt to provide information useful in monitoring the consistent application of this policy and improving levels of attendance.

Average primary school attendance in England is over 95% and the figure OFSTED expects for your child is 97%. If your child's attendance falls below 95% we will raise this as a concern and work in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies to resolve problems and improve attendance. Your child cannot make their best progress at school if they do not attend punctually and regularly.

If a child's attendance falls below 90% this is classed as 'Persistent Absence' and has serious consequences.

The class teachers are initially responsible for monitoring the attendance of the pupils in their class. They inform the Deputy Headteacher or the Headteacher if there is any cause for concern. These may include:

- regular periods of unexplained non-attendance
- patterns of non-attendance (e.g. every Monday morning)
- regular late arrival in the mornings
- attendance falling below 95%
- anecdotal evidence from the pupil or other pupils
- absences coinciding with known domestic disruptions

Raw data, the overall figures for the school without identifying individual pupils, are passed on to the Local Authority (LA) and the DfE termly for statistical analysis.

Parents and pupils have access to their own child's attendance data.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence:**

The definitions accepted by the school are those laid out in the DfE Document "*School Attendance: Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities*" (October 2014). These include clarification on authorised absences including hospital and medical appointments, family holidays, sickness, etc.

If children have a medical/dental/specialist appointment they are normally expected to attend school on the morning or afternoon not affected by the appointment.

Many absences are authorised retrospectively when a pupil returns to school after illness, although the school is not obliged to give authorisation if there

are doubts about the nature of the absence. **It is the decision of the school whether or not to authorise an absence.**

If we have concerns about the number of absences due to illness or medical appointments etc. we may ask you to provide some form of evidence (e.g. an appointment card or letter, Doctor's note, copy of a prescription, copy of the label from a prescription medicine etc.) before we are prepared to authorise absences.

Pupils can be automatically taken off the school roll if they have not attended for more than six weeks without explanation.

### **Parent/Carer requests for 'Leave of Absence'**

Parents/Carers must make an advance request to school, on the official request form available from the school office, if they wish their child to be absent from school for reasons such as family holiday or urgent family matters etc. There is no automatic right for approval to be granted. **The school will decide whether or not to authorise the request and cases will be considered on their individual merits.**

Requests for authorised 'Leave of Absence' will NOT usually be approved if:

- the child's attendance in the previous school year was less than 95%
- the child's attendance at the time of the request is less than 95%

Parents/Carers will be informed if the school is not prepared to authorise the request.

### **Religious Observance**

'Religious Observance' requests will usually be granted for a maximum of three days during a year for, "a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs" (Pupil Registration Regulations 2006). These days should relate to significant festivals in the relevant faith calendar.

Again, the school will decide whether or not to authorise requests and cases will be considered on their individual merits. Parents/Carers will be informed if the school is not prepared to authorise the request.

### **Following up individual non-attendance:**

When concerns have been raised the school's first course of action is to contact the parents to see if there are specific problems, either at home or in school, that can be easily remedied. The attendance rate is then monitored by the school and if attendance improves significantly no further action is taken.

If the problems persist then the Headteacher and the Education Investigation Service will consider other strategies, dependent on the individual case. These may include a specific contract system within school, issuing of a £100 fixed penalty notice, notification of concern regarding the pupil's welfare to Social Services or even, in extreme cases, legal action.

The following sequence illustrates the monitoring and intervention procedures followed by the school:

1. Morning and afternoon register entries by class teacher
2. Received absence messages noted on register log
3. Daily register check for uninformed absences
4. 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence if no message: Phone parent/carer (& leave message if no reply)
5. 2<sup>nd</sup> day of absence if no message: Phone again, & try emergency contacts if no reply; post standard absence information request letter
6. If a message is received, enter it into log & \*update register code
7. If no message after a week, contact EIS and implement agreed intervention and support programme
8. If 18 'Unauthorised' sessions in the last 6 school weeks, or 10 consecutive days absence without contact from Parent/Carer, a referral will be made to the EIS for statutory involvement
9. Update contact with parent/carer for prolonged absences.

Stages 2-9 are usually implemented by Office staff and DHT  
Stage \*6 by class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for keeping up to date with developments regarding any unexplained or long-term absences.

#### **Induction for new pupils and staff:**

The parents/carers of all new pupils are given a School Brochure which includes a synopsis of the attendance policy. All new staff are given a copy of the policy as part of their Staff Information Pack.

As the majority of new pupils are infant age and have specific or general learning difficulties, the school does not have a general induction policy to be utilised in the classroom.

#### **Re-entry strategies for absentees:**

When long-term non-attenders return to school the staff attempt to make them feel welcome back at school without drawing attention to the prolonged absence. The pupils are placed back in their class and given their individual programmes of work to continue. Overt censure of the pupil's behaviour will be avoided, although the classroom situation will be monitored to ensure that other pupils do not consider the non-attendance to be an acceptable role-model.

If there are specific reasons, in individual cases, where this is not felt to be appropriate (specifically a school-phobic pupil), separate arrangements would be made.

### **Rewards and Sanctions:**

The school rewards good attendance on a regular basis in assemblies, specifically at the end of each term and at the end of the school year. This is done through the presentation of Attendance Certificates. Individual classes reward good attendance more frequently, most often through praise.

The school works in conjunction with the LA to support local initiatives and reward schemes.

Sanctions for non-attendance are not deemed appropriate within school unless the pupil has been truanting. This is because the school's first priority is to be motivating, and this would be totally undermined if the first thing that happened to an absentee pupil was punishment on return to school. In the case of deliberate truancy sanctions would be applied judiciously, in conjunction with the pupil's parents.

### **People responsible for overall attendance at Woodsetton:**

Mr P Rhind-Tutt	Headteacher	School procedures
Mrs K Beer	Deputy Headteacher	Data collection
Mrs P Byatt	Receptionist	First day absence calling.

### **Summary:**

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to guarantee as high a level of attendance as possible and that through good attendance ensure every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, classteachers and the Governing Body every two years or earlier if deemed necessary.

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### **Further sources of information**

Relevant legislation on [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education Act 2002

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999

The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011

The Education and Inspections Act 2006