

Wood End Primary School



Working together today for a brighter tomorrow

Attendance Policy

Approved by: Full Governing Body

Date: 10th July 2019

Last reviewed on: July 2019

Next review due by: September 2020

Contents

1. Aims.....
2. Legislation and guidance.....
3. School procedures.....
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence
5. Strategies for promoting attendance
6. Attendance monitoring
7. Roles and responsibilities
8. Monitoring arrangements.....
9. Links with other policies.....

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

At Wood End we consider attendance of

- 100% to be excellent
- 97 – 99% to be very good
- 95 – 96% to be good
- 93 – 94% to be below national average
- 90 – 92% to be a cause for concern
- less than 90% to be unacceptable persistent absence

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)

- [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.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

At Wood End the attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. 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 include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school between 8:45 and 8:55 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55. The register for the second session will be taken at the beginning of the session for each key stage. If pupils are not present at this point they will be recorded as absent. The record will be amended to late if they should arrive after this point.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents can notify the school by phone, letter or in person. Verbal messages on the parent's behalf from an adult relative or representative such as a child minder or friend may be accepted at the school's discretion on the first day of absence – subsequent absences must be explained by the parent. Verbal messages from children, e.g. siblings, will not be accepted.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Parent's of children whose attendance is below 95% will be asked to provide medical evidence.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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. Children should be brought back to school after appointments, if the child returns for part of a session, the attendance code will be changed to 'late (L)'. If the appointment is later in the morning, then children should be brought into school in the first instance, in order to receive their attendance mark.

Evidence of medical or dental appointment will need to be provided prior to the appointment or immediately on return to school.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after 9:30am will be marked absent, using the appropriate code (this will count as an absence on the pupil's attendance register)

Schools will actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. Punctuality will be monitored weekly.

If punctuality becomes a recurring concern;

- A letter will be sent to parents identifying the concern.
- Parents will be invited to attend a meeting in school with Mrs Farley
- Parents will be offered an Early Help Assessment to support the family with improved punctuality
- Referral will be made to Education Welfare Officer.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

At Wood End Primary school we will follow the following procedures when a child is absent.

Day one:

- After 9:00am, for pupils for whom no message has been received, Mrs Farley will call parents to ascertain why their child is absent. She will ask the reason for the absence and parents are expected to provide as much detailed information as possible. This will enable school to decide whether the absence can be authorised. If the absence will not be authorised, the parent/carer will be informed.

- In the case of minor ailments the parent/carer will be encouraged to send the child in with an assurance that school staff will monitor their child closely. If there has been a pattern of specific symptoms in the school, such minor illnesses may be treated as a valid reason for absence.
- Reasons for the absence will be added to the register.
- If Mrs Farley is unable to make contact an answerphone message will be left and a text sent to the mobile number provided by the parent/carer.

Day two:

- If contact was not possible on day one and no reason for the absence has been provided, Mrs Farley will make a second phone call. If contact still cannot be made, a follow up text will be sent.

Day three:

- If contact was made on day one, the parent/carer will be called again for an update and to discuss when the child will return to school.

Continued absence:

- If contact has still not been made and the child continues to be absent, a home visit will be attempted by Mrs Farley. If school have concerns for the well-being and safety of the child who is absent, outside agencies may be contacted for further advice.
- Our school will notify the local authority of any child who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or, more at such intervals as are agreed by the school and the local authority.
- Our school will also notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended. The notice will be given as soon as the ground for deletion is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register.
- Our school will only delete a pupil's name from the admission register under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraph (f)(iii) or (h)(iii) if our school and the local authority have failed to establish the pupil's whereabouts after jointly making reasonable enquiries.

School will follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort will be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence, making additional home visits where necessary.

3.6 Reporting to parents

A child's attendance record will be reported to parents annually in the written end-of-year report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/ dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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 Age 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

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence it will be recorded as unauthorised. Unauthorised reasons include the following, (school will also use the following categories to record absences via the school census):

- Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher
If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.
- Arrived in school after registration closed
- Reason for absence not yet provided

Further examples of reasons for an absence that would be classed as unauthorised at Wood End include:

- Parent's illness/looking after sick relatives.
- School clothing in the wash.
- Head lice.
- Children at a different school that is closed that day.
- Child not wanting to come to school.

Continued Absence will be followed up by procedures including:

If a pupil's attendance drops to below 95% threshold;

Parents will receive a letter with notification of absence figure and the concern
During the following 4 weeks their attendance figure will be closely monitored.

If there is no improvement or their attendance figure continues to drop:

- Parents will receive a second letter inviting them to a meeting with the PFSO (Mrs Farley)

If parents do not attend the scheduled meeting:

- Parents will receive a letter with notification of consequences from the Headteacher

Home visits and telephone calls may be implemented by school or the EWO during this process.

If there continues to be no or little improvement

- Parents will receive letter of consequences and information from EWO.

Persistent Absence

If attendance falls below 90%

- Parents will receive a letter with notification of absence figure and the concern During the following 4 weeks their attendance figure will be closely monitored.
- An offer of an Early Help Assessment to support the family with improved school attendance
- A referral to the Local Authority regarding continued absences.
- A referral to the Local Authority Vulnerable Pupils' Team.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can refer to the Local Authority to fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

In school we will promote positive attendance by using strategies including:

- Weekly update of class attendance percentage for children in Special Mentions Assembly
- Reporting class attendance on newsletter
- In school display board sharing attendance figures
- Termly certificates for children with attendance of 100%
- Termly reward for children with attendance of 97% or above
- Special reward for children with 100% attendance at end of academic year
- Termly 1 week drive to encourage daily attendance / punctuality
- Sharing positive improvement in attendance with parents
- Having a named contact – Hayley Farley (Parent Family Support Officer -PFSO)
- Inform parents of concern in a timely manner.

6. Attendance monitoring

The PFSO monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If absence continues parents are expected to call again on the third day.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

School uses attendance data from the register, to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Although pupils under 5 are non compulsory the above internal school procedures will be applied

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 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.

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Exclusion Policy