

Woodcroft Primary School

Attendance and Absence Policy

Date policy last reviewed: April 2023

Signed by:

Craig Tallon

5/4/2023

Headteacher

Date:

5/4/2023

Richard Burrows

Chair of governors

Date:

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Statement of intent

Woodcroft Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's Learning Mentor is **Elaine Hurley**, and can be contacted via **ehurley@woodcroft.barnet.sch.uk**. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the Learning Mentor for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the Attendance Leader role, (Deputy Head)
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The Attendance Leader is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

The Attendance Manager is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed at 9:15am
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- 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 absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

Registration is at **at 8:45 am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils can **arrive from 8:30 am and enter class**.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be completed by **8:50 am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at **9:15 am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time

5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before **8:45 am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, office staff will contact the parent by text in the first instance and then via a telephone call after 11:00 am or as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
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The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness and the number of illnesses.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Learning Mentor, Education Welfare Officer (LA) and/or attendance officer. The school will inform the Education Welfare Officer (LA), on a fortnightly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

6. Attendance register

The school uses **Arbor** to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session**. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the school office and collect a 'Request for Leave of Absence Form' prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

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. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the Educational Welfare Officer (LA) if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.

- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by **8:45 am**, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10. Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. 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 classrooms
 - All toilets
 - The library
 - The school grounds, etc.
- 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.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, 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.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

11. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Learning Mentor, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Engaging with Education Welfare Officer (LA).
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating attendance clinics.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the '[Monitoring and analysing absence](#)' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of

absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Assemblies
- Certificates
- Prizes
- Postcards/letters home

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

12. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Learning Mentor will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the Education Welfare Officer (LA), and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

13. PA

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the Educational Welfare Officer (LA) and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

14. Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after **one term**, the Learning Mentor will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents
- Working with the Educational Welfare Officer (LA) to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the Educational Welfare Officer (LA) to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

15. Monitoring and analysing absence

The Deputy Head and Learning Mentor will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The Deputy Head and Learning Mentor will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Deputy Head and Learning Mentor will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. They will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The Governing Body will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement.

Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The Governing Body will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The Governing Body will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the Deputy Head and Learning Mentor and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

16. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the Arbor.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is January 2024.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Woodcroft Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers and information from parents regarding absences are passed immediately to the Learning Mentor.
2. A 'Consultation Sheet' is shared with the SENCO, Family Support Worker and Learning Mentor (Safeguarding Team) and Headteacher fortnightly detailing fortnightly attendance of focus pupils, (historical low attendance and PA pupils).
3. The Safeguarding Team meet weekly to discuss ongoing cases and attendance concerns.
4. The School Office initially contacted by text on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the Learning Mentor daily by 11:00 and phone calls are made to ascertain the reason for the absence.
5. Any parent not contacted after 2 days a home visit is made, by the Learning Mentor and Deputy Head.
6. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
7. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard.
8. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored and medical evidence will be required for future absences to be authorised, and the Learning Mentor may contact the parents to discuss this.
9. The pupil's attendance is monitored, if attendance does not improve, a second letter to parents is sent and they may be requested to attend a meeting in school. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local Education Welfare Officer (EWO), who will then conduct a meeting.
10. If targets are not met, the Education Welfare Officer protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents; if there is no improvement, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.

Leave of Absence Requests

This guidance is aimed at clarifying the process when parents request or show an interest in planned absence during term time.

1. SLT/LM and all staff refer parents to the School Office for a leave of absence request form
2. Office provide all parents on request a leave of absence form and inform parents:
 - a. That this should be returned to the School Office when completed
 - a. That leave of absence during term time can only be authorised in 'exceptional circumstances.'
 - b. To provide supporting evidence where appropriate (invites, appointments, etc) which should be considered when deciding if the request for leave of absence be granted.
 - c. That the form will be ready for collection, 48 hours after receiving the request
 - d. That Mr Tallon (Headteacher) or, in his absence, Mr Russell (Deputy Head) will make a judgement regarding whether the request can be authorised or not.
2. The Office, on receipt of a request for leave of absence form, should:
 - a. Copy the form and any supporting documentation.
 - a. The copy to be dated and filed, in chronological order of receipt, in the 'Office Absence Request' folder.
 - b. The original to be filed in a separate 'Headteachers Absence Request' folder with any supporting documentation
 - c. Notify Headteacher using the 'Headteachers Absence Request' folder (not individual sheets)
2. Headteacher to complete the original application in the 'Headteachers Absence Request Folder' and return to the office.
3. Office to notify parents of the outcome and that the form is ready for collection.
4. When parent/s collect the form, they should sign and date the receipt.
5. The Office should then copy the completed form for parents.
6. If leave of absence has not been granted, parents should also be given information on Fixed Penalty Notices.
7. Leave of absence requests granted are immediately added to Arbor

Note:

The Office Absence Request Folder should contain a chronologically filed and dated set of application copies. It should only be used to verify receipt of an application.

The Headteachers Absence Request Folder should be used to verify outcomes of absence application decisions.

Individual forms should not be circulated.

Staff Procedures when Pupils Absent from School

Outline of the procedures and actions to follow, after a pupil absence

Day 1 - Office Staff/Learning Mentor

1. Review registers, lates and the answer machine for absence messages
2. Send a text to parents of absent pupils, who have not contacted the school
3. Use 'Day 1 Absence Message', which requests parents to contact the school with reason for absence on the first day of absence
4. Check the delivery report to ensure receipt of text. Failed delivery should be followed up
5. Learning Mentor to call parents/emergency contacts who have not contacted the school. Message to be left if necessary.

Day 2 - Office Staff/Learning Mentor

1. If the parent/s have not responded to offer a reason for absence, send out 'Day 2 Absence Message' text
2. The 'Day 2 Absence Message' is different from the 'Day 1 Absence Message' making reference to this being the second request for a reason for absence.
3. Failure to respond to text should result in a phone call to the parents/emergency contacts to clarify the whereabouts of the pupil by the Learning Mentor

Day 3 - Office Staff/Learning Mentor

1. If parents have still not responded to Day 1 & Day 2 Absence Messages and phone calls, further phone calls to an emergency number should be made to clarify the whereabouts of the pupil
2. If no response/reply from parents, refer the pupil to the Learning Mentor to investigate
 - a. Learning Mentor to make further phone calls to available numbers
 - a. Learning Mentor accompanied by a member of staff makes a Home Visit, with a prepared letter, requesting contact with school which can be posted through the door of the home address, if the parent is not available to speak to

Day 4 - Learning Mentor/EWO/Deputy Head

1. If there has been no parent contact following a Home Visit
 1. Learning Mentor refers the pupil to Education Welfare Officer, after investigation of pupil whereabouts
 2. Learning Mentor contacts Deputy Head to complete a 'Child Missing from School' referral, after 5 days of absence.
 3. Learning Mentor contacts Deputy Head to complete a 'Child Missing from Education' referral, after 10 days of absence, (20 days unauthorised)

Note* If there is an absence in the school office, the replacement member of staff should assume the roles described*

All phone calls regarding absences, should be logged in a 'Absence Phone Log'. An 'Absence Phone Log' should be kept by the Office, Learning Mentor & Deputy Head.

Woodcroft Primary School Attendance Guide for Parents

This guide is for the parents of all children at Woodcroft Primary School. We are aware that there will be occasional exceptional circumstances that will require individual support or alternative arrangements. Staff members are always available to discuss any attendance or punctuality issues parents may be experiencing.

Q.1 When does my child need to arrive at School?

Children can arrive at school from **8.30am** when supervision is provided. Children are able to enter the school from **8.30 am** when staff will be on duty around the school.



The school opens in the morning at **8:00am for Breakfast Club**

Your child should be in school by **8.45am** when registration begins.

Q.2 What happens if my child is late?

Registration closes at **8:50am** prompt.

If your child arrives between 8:50 am - 9:15 am they should report directly to the office and will be marked **late** in the register. If your child arrives after **9:15 am** they will receive an **absence** mark instead of a late mark. Where children arrive after **9:15 am** parents are required to explain the reasons for lateness. If an acceptable explanation is not received for lateness your child will be recorded with an **unauthorised absence**.

Q.3 Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school before 9.00am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day. A message can be left on the school answer machine 24 hours a day. However, we appreciate a written explanation on your child's return to school.

Q.4 What reasons does the school accept for absence?



- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments.
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Participation in approved public performance

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to be granted leave of absence well in advance, giving details of the reasons for your request. In cases of medical/dental appointments, please show the appropriate appointment card or letter, so it can be coded in the register and **children are expected to return to school** unless the appointment is late in the afternoon. In cases of recurring absences for illness, you may be asked to produce medical evidence.

Q.5 What is an unacceptable reason for absence?

The school will not authorise absences for:

- Day trips
- Birthdays
- Visiting relatives
- Family holidays
- Looking after siblings
- **This list is not conclusive**

Q.6 Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

Woodcroft Primary School operates a daily Text Message Service whereby staff will make every effort to contact families where children have failed to attend school in time for morning registration. However, it should be noted that you are still expected to **contact the school yourself** on the first day of your child's absence. If on the third day the school has received no contact from the parents/carers a member of staff will telephone, and a referral will be made to our Education Welfare Officer and a home visit will be carried out.

The school number is...0208 959 3244

Letters and phone calls will be sent alerting you to attendance issues. Parents can also access Arbor for their child's attendance. These follow Government guidelines which state that a child's attendance at school should be at least **96%** if they are to achieve their full potential.

It is vital for **emergency purposes** that we have your most up to date contact details.

If you, or your listed contacts, change a number, please inform the school immediately.

Q.7 Can we take family holidays during term time?

Family holidays must be taken in the school holidays. If, in **exceptional circumstances**, you need to request permission for your child to be granted leave of absence during term time, please make an appointment to see the Headteacher. You will be asked to complete a leave of absence request form (available through the school office). This form will need to be completed at least a week in advance of the leave of absence.

The Headteacher has the right to refuse a request for leave of absence having given consideration to whether the request falls into exceptional circumstances. If leave has not been granted, a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued for the unauthorised leave.

Q. 8 What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Look in their school bags, check homework diaries and communicate with your child's teachers. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education.

Q.9 My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact a member of staff immediately and discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons:

- Difficulties with school work
- Friendship problems
- Etc.

In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with the **Education Welfare Officer, Emily Haley** based at Woodcroft Primary School or the **Learning Mentor, Elaine Hurley**. They hold bi-weekly drop in Attendance Surgeries and are here to help.