



# **Attendance Policy**

## **Aims**

At Woodbridge Trust, our team of dedicated staff have actively contributed to the development of this attendance policy, and their input has been sought and valued throughout the process. This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(2024\)](#).

We take great pride in maintaining high standards of attendance across all educational settings: providing 'calm, safe and supportive' learning environments. We encourage all students to succeed by attending school regularly and being punctual, regardless of their ability, levels or specific needs. We expect that all children will attend school as long as they are fit and well enough to do so in line with the expectations of 380 half days (190 full days) for an academic year. In our attempts to maintain these standards we adhere to a set of rigorous guidelines which value, and rely on relationships between parents and other professionals (transport, school nurse and early Interventions etc).

This policy reflects the responsibilities for school in respect of student attendance through:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including pupil absence.
- Work in partnership with families to remove barriers and work together to put in place alternative routes of support.
- Have robust systems that follow up absence and develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence.
- Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents/carers relating to school attendance that identifies barriers to good attendance and address them.
- Use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- To work with external agencies to support all children to have good attendance.

## **Working Together to improve attendance**

To remove barriers all partners should work together to:

### ***Expect***

Aspire to high standards of attendance and build a culture of improvement.

### ***Monitor***

Rigorously analyse attendance data to identify patterns.

### ***Listen and Understand***

Discussion with pupils and parents to understand barriers.

### ***Facilitate Support***

Identify the correct package of support e.g., home visits, Early Help, bespoke packages.

### ***Formalise Support***

Work together to explain the consequences and review support package.

### ***Enforce***

If there is no change enforce statutory interventions; penalty notices/prosecution to protect pupils right to an education.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***Parents***

Parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure that their child has full attendance at school and is punctual. Where a student is unable to attend school parents must adhere to the following procedures:

- Make a phone call to the school office or send a Dojo message to the class team.
- Medical or other appointments must be reported to school in advance. Medical evidence may be requested to be seen.
- Authorised Absences – Will only be agreed at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- Parents are responsible for providing up to date data collection forms – providing more than 1 emergency contact number.

### ***Staff***

If a student is absent from school the following procedure will be followed by staff:

- Record attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis.
- Reported absences will be recorded on SIMS by the office or class team. Registers close at 9.30am.

- Unreported absence must be followed up in a timely manner and recorded on SIMS with the correct code.
- Maintain strong respectful relationships with families to secure trust and engagement, enabling school to both support and challenge when needed.

### **Attendance Lead**

The Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- If no contact by 10am absences for LAC or children on Child Protection Plans will be immediately reported to the designated social worker and Early Intervention Team, this will be recorded on CPOMS and actioned by the attendance lead or DSL/SLT.
- Following 1st day contact, if no valid reason is given this will be recorded as unauthorised. Continuing efforts to contact parents/carers by the attendance lead will be maintained.
- Continual attempts to make contact with the family will be made.
- Home visits will be undertaken as appropriate after two days of non-contact.
- Welfare checks may be undertaken at the discretion of the DSL/SLT.
- The attendance lead will follow the 'Working Together to Improve Attendance' (2024) framework to support students and their families.

### **Attendance Champion (SLT)**

The Attendance Champion will:

- Lead, champion and be responsible for improving attendance across the school.
- Critically analyse absence data and implement strategies to improve attendance across the school.
- Liaise weekly with the attendance lead in order to monitor patterns of attendance and 'facilitate' support.
- Meet at least termly with the Attendance Lead to review the Trust's policies and procedures.

### **Trustees**

The Trustees are responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Recognising and promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Ensuring that effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools is shared across the Trust.

### **Persistent Absence**

A student becomes a 'Persistent Absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and parents' / carers' fullest support and co-operation is required to tackle this.

All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents / carers will be informed of this immediately. Persistently Absent students are tracked and monitored carefully through the school management system.

## **Child Missing in Education**

A child who has been absent for more than 10 days after an authorised absence or 20 days of consecutive unauthorised absence will be supported in line with "Keeping Children safe in Education" policy and contact will be made with the Local Authority to establish (jointly) their whereabouts through CME.

## **Absence Monitoring**

Each educational setting will regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.

Making make use of National Statistics from the DfE to analyse attendance data and use the 'View your Education Data tool' (statutory from September 2024) to compare attendance outcomes to different cohorts of students at a local and national level to identify where intervention is most needed.

Schools will be particularly mindful of students absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.

<b>Strategies may include:</b>	
<b>90% +</b>	No support required
<b>&gt;90% (Persistent absence)</b> Cause for concern	Contact made with parents (phone call) Support put in place where needed.
<b>Below 85 % (Persistent absence)</b> Serious cause for concern:	Home visits with face-to-face discussions Multi-agency referral where appropriate Possible arranged meetings between parents, students, school staff and health professionals to decide on the appropriate strategy. Early Helps opened where necessary.
<b>79 % (19% persistent absence)</b> Serious cause for concern:	Bespoke support packages for families Home visits – Face to Face meetings Early Intervention support for identified children (C.P/LAC) Multiagency referral  Legal actions where needed (Please see flow chart above)

## Sanctions

Woodbridge Trust will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an **individual, case-by-case basis and will fully consider the medical needs of each student**.

### **Penalty notices**

The head teacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

### **Notices to improve**

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences

- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## **Reporting**

Parents will be informed through their child's EHC Plan and other calendared meetings throughout the year about their son or daughter's absence.

The Senior Leadership Team will discuss weekly of any attendance concerns. The Trust will be informed weekly of whole school attendance data by the head of each setting. The Trustees will be informed through the termly trust report.

## **Appendix 1: Attendance Codes**

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance:

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		



<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	<p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> </ul> <p>Detained under a sentence of detention</p>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

## **Appendix 2: Application for Leave of Absence**

Students attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. Full attendance is vital for your son or daughter's educational progress.

If you wish to apply for your son or daughter to be absent from school please complete this form and return it at least four weeks before the intended absence.

<b>Parents Section</b>					
Name of Son or Daughter		Class		Date of Birth	
Name of person making request					
Signature(s)					
Address					
Reason for absence  "Exceptional Circumstances"					
Number of days		First day of absence		Date back in school	
<b>School Section</b>					
Current % Attendance			Number of unauthorised absences this term		
Total number of Leave of Absences this academic year					
Leave authorised	Yes		No (see below)		
Reason	No details of any exceptional circumstances have been provided.  The leave has not been requested sufficiently in advance.  The reasons given for the request are not considered to be exceptional because:				
Signed					
Date					