

Wood End Primary School



Working together today for a brighter tomorrow

Attendance Policy

Approved by: Full Governing Body

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1. Aims

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

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent absence and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Promoting punctuality

~~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
- 96% to be good
- 93 – 95.9% to be below national average
- 90 – 92% to be a cause for concern
- less than 90% to be unacceptable persistent absence
- 50% or less is severe absence

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [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. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- A link governor for attendance is identified who monitors the implementation and impact of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented strategies
- Issuing fixed penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Sonia Sharma and can be contacted via 01902 558940

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer role is carried out by H Farley who is the Pupil and Family Support Officer (PFSO) she can be contacted via 01902 558940

3.5 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 on the same day.

3.6 Office staff

Office staff are expected to

- take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the PFSO in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:45am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence) and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child (and ensure that these are kept up to date)
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time - enabling themselves to be prompt

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive on each school day as follows

	Arrive	Register for the first session will be taken at
Reception, Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6	8.30 – 8.40am	8:40am
Nursery	8.45 – 8.55am	8:55am

The register for the second session will be taken at the beginning of the session for each class. 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.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7).

Parents can notify the school by phone, (leaving answering machine message if necessary) email or in person to the member of staff at the gate. 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.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

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

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Evidence of medical or dental appointment will need to be provided prior to the appointment or immediately on return to school.

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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- A pupil who arrives 30 minutes after registration time 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.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Day one:

- After 8:45am, 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.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it to the register as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- 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. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer or contact police.

Continued absence:

- Parents should notify school of reasons for absence on each day. If no message is received Mrs Farley will send a message requesting an update. If no message has been received by the third day a call will be made.
- 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.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly written reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events which are unavoidable

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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 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:

- School clothing in the wash.
- Head lice.
- Children at a different school that is closed that day.
- Child not wanting to come to school.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can 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.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 or withdraw the notice.

6. 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 100% attendance
- 1 week drive to encourage daily attendance / punctuality in Autumn & Spring
- Sharing positive improvement in attendance with parents
- Having a named contact – Hayley Farley (Pupil Family Support Officer -PFSO)
- Inform parents of concern in a timely manner.
- Following EBSNA pathway (Emotion based non school attendance)
- Meeting with parents of non compulsory age children in the term prior to becoming compulsory where attendance data suggests early intervention would be beneficial

7. Attendance monitoring

The PFSO monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families (This support will also be offered to parents of noncompulsory age children in the term prior to becoming compulsory where attendance data suggests early intervention would be beneficial)
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will

- Provide regular attendance reports to school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Continued Absence will be followed up by procedures including:

If a pupil's attendance drops to below 96% threshold;

Parents will receive a letter with notification of absence figure and the concern (appendix 1)
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 (appendix 2)

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

- Parents will receive a third letter (appendix 3) inviting them to a meeting with the PFSO (Mrs Farley) and EWO

If there is further deterioration in attendance figures to below 90% :

- Parents will receive a letter (appendix 3a) explaining that the child is now identified as being persistently absent and inviting them to a meeting with the PFSO (Mrs Farley) and EWO

If parents do not attend the scheduled meeting:

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

If there continues to be no or little improvement

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

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

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.

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


8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour Policy


<h1>Wood End Primary School</h1>	
<h2>Attendance Policy – Appendix A</h2> <h3>Absence and attendance Codes</h3>	

The following codes are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	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	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

<h1>Wood End Primary School</h1>	
<p>Appendix 1 Letter for absence falling under 96%</p>	

Children are absent from school for a variety of reasons. Often this includes unavoidable illnesses and other essential absences. We appreciate that you may have contacted school on these occasions to keep us updated and we hope this continues.


As you are no doubt aware, research shows that regular attendance is considered to be an important factor in raising children's achievement in school.

As your child's attendance is below the national average of 96%, we are writing to bring this to your attention and ask for your on-going support in order to rectify or improve this situation. Your child's attendance is currently xxxx%.

Attendance is checked weekly with our Education Welfare Officer and if an improvement cannot be seen you will be invited into school to discuss any issues.

At this point I would like to inform you that it is your responsibility to contact school on every day of absence and that all absences may be treated as unauthorised unless you provide proof, for example: hospital appointment cards, doctors' appointments text notifications or copies of prescriptions.

If we can provide any further support or advice, please do not hesitate to contact us.


<h1>Wood End Primary School</h1>	
<h2>Appendix 2</h2> <h3>Letter for absence remaining under 96%</h3>	

We have previously written to you about our concerns regarding XXXXXX's attendance and as you will note from the attached Registration Certificate it has decreased further in recent weeks. Parents must contact the school office on each day of any absence stating the reason for non-attendance.

School is required to record reasons for all absences.

- Where good reason is given, supported by evidence, these absences are recorded as authorised and no further action is taken.
- Where the reason is not known or where the reason is not fully explained or evidenced, these absences are recorded as 'unauthorised'. These marks are considered as truancy and are followed up by the Education Welfare Officer who may recommend that the Local Education Authority start legal proceedings. Legal proceedings can be taken if a child has unauthorised absences and their attendance falls below 90%.
- Additionally, any Leave of Absence during term time (for example, a holiday) will be recorded as unauthorised, unless there are evidenced exceptional circumstances for the request.

I would remind you that regular and punctual attendance at school is essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. Currently your child's attendance is % which is unacceptable and needs to improve.


<h1>Wood End Primary School</h1>	
<p>Appendix 3</p> <p>Letter of invite for absence remaining under 96%</p>	

We have previously written to you about our concerns regarding XXXXXX's attendance and as you will note from the attached Registration Certificate it is unacceptably low. Your child's attendance has been monitored for a period of time. Their attendance is currently ____%.

I would like you to attend a meeting with myself and Mrs Roe our Education Welfare Officer _____ on _____ at _____ to discuss attendance. The assessment is designed to be supportive in order to improve attendance, and avoid any legal proceedings.

At the meeting you might like to mention any concerns or worries you have regarding your child.

At this point I would also like to remind you that any future absences may be recorded as unauthorised unless you provide a doctor's note, proof of hospital appointments or packaging from prescribed antibiotics.

<h1>Wood End Primary School</h1>	
<p>Appendix 3a Letter of invite for absence falling under 90%</p>	

We have previously written to you about our concerns regarding XXXXXX's attendance and as you will note from the attached Registration Certificate it is unacceptably low. Your child's attendance has been monitored for a period of time. Their attendance is currently ____% which puts them into the category of a Persistent Absentee.

I would like you to attend a meeting with myself and Mrs Roe our Education Welfare Officer _____ on _____ at _____ to discuss attendance and an Early Help Assessment. The assessment is designed to be supportive in order to improve attendance, and avoid any legal proceedings. Failure to attend this meeting may result in a referral to the Local Authority.

At the meeting you might like to mention any concerns or worries you have regarding your child.

At this point I would also like to remind you that any future absences may be recorded as unauthorised unless you provide a doctor's note, proof of hospital appointments or packaging from prescribed antibiotics.