



Attendance Policy 2021 - 2022

**This policy was written on behalf of the school by our current
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At Woodland Community Primary School, we believe good attendance at school is crucial for effective learning to take place. As children grow and prepare for their next stage of education and employment they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and employers. We will do all that we can to work together with our families to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Our Woodland target for attendance is **96.5%**. Where children are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality we will put into place effective strategies to bring about improvement.

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
- Increase parents' and children's awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Improve children's punctuality

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

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 Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [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 are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of each school day and at the beginning of the afternoon session, immediately after lunch break.

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.

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 by 8.45am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 8.55am. Any child arriving after this time and up to 9.15am will be marked as late and any child arriving after 9.15am will be marked as absent. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 12.30pm in EYFS, 12.45pm in Years 1, 2 and 3, 12.50pm in Year 4 and 1pm in Years 5 and 6.

The Child Welfare Lead will continue to complete the DfE attendance return form online. This form should be completed daily and submitted by 12:00 midday. The DfE use the information that the school provides to help monitor the impact of COVID-19 and to inform the government's response.

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 by telephone - see also section 6. Any children who are absent whose parents have not notified school will receive a First Day Response call from school from our Home School Family Liaison Worker, Miss June Williams by 9.30am on the first day of absence.

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.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer/family to consider government advice around isolation on the return from destinations and that families need to be aware of the potential impact (including penalty fines) on school attendance and learning on their return.

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.

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. Parents should notify school of these appointment at least 1 week prior either in person, by phone or in writing. Proof of the appointment will be requested from parents. Parents must report to the office when collecting a child for or returning a child after an appointment. The school will keep a record of when children depart and return.

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

It is important that children arrive in school on time so that they have a settled start to the day. The school day begins at 8.45 a.m. and registers close at 8.55am. Any child arriving after this time and up to 9.15am will be marked as late and any child arriving after 9.15am will be marked as absent.

The Child Welfare Lead and Pastoral Officer, in conjunction with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher, monitor punctuality.

- Families will receive a telephone call from the Child Welfare Lead to discuss recurring punctuality issues in the first instance.
- If punctuality continues to be an issue a letter will be sent to parents/carers to inform them that the matter will be referred to the Deputy Headteacher.
- A meeting will be set up with the Deputy Headteacher to discuss the impact of recurring attendance issues.
- Failure to improve punctuality following this will result in a referral to the Headteacher and link governor for attendance and punctuality.
- The Headteacher can refer the case to the School Attendance Team who may consider issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice.

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. Outlined below is the Woodland procedure for recording and monitoring attendance and following up pupil absence:

- All class teachers complete registers accurately for each morning and afternoon session And they will draw to the Headteacher's and/or Child Welfare Lead's attention any absences that are cause for concern.
- Particular attention will be paid to the attendance of pupils who are identified as 'at risk' in line with our policies for child protection and safeguarding.
- Children arriving late will be recorded by the Pastoral Officer, and the Child Welfare Lead will keep a record of times and occasions that a child is late. This will be challenged if repeated incidents are observed.
- Parents are asked to telephone or notify the school if their child is absent or ill.
- The Pastoral Officer will make telephone contact with parents when a child is absent if they have not notified the school. This will happen before 9.30am on the first day of absence. If there is no response to the call, a text message will then be sent. Individual children may be visited by the Child Welfare Lead with the Pastoral Officer to follow up the absence.
- If no reason for absence is received, school will continue to contact the parents/carers on each subsequent day that the child is absent following the procedure above.
- If a child has three separate periods of absence in any school year, a medical evidence request letter is sent to parents/carers.
- If absences continue and no medical evidence is provided, a warning letter (warning of an invite to meeting in school), is sent to the parent/carer.
- Should absences continue, parents/carers are invited into school for an attendance and punctuality panel meeting with the Child Welfare Lead.

- The Child Welfare Lead holds five attendance and punctuality panels throughout the academic year the dates are as follows:
 - 1st Panel (with Child Welfare Lead) Autumn Term 2
 - 2nd Panel (with Child Welfare Lead) Spring Term 1
 - 3rd Panel (with Deputy Head Teacher) Spring Term 1
 - 4th Panel (with Child Welfare Lead and Educational Welfare Officer) Spring Term 2
 - 5th Panel (with Head Teacher & link governor) Summer Term 1

Woodland Community Primary School is allocated 2 cases/families for referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) per school year. School can contact the EWO for advice and support with attendance meetings and one-off home visits as and when required.

The Child Welfare Lead, in conjunction with Pastoral Officer, regularly identify poor attenders and those who fail to improve. In these instances, penalty notice warning letters will be sent to parents/carers. If absences continue and the pupil has 20 absences in a 12 week period, the school will request that the LA issue a Penalty Notice – see section 4.2.

The child welfare lead ensures that procedures for safeguarding pupils and continuing to try to improve whole school attendance is a high priority.

3.6 Reporting to parents

The school will report children's attendance to parents annually in their child's end of school year report. This will include the possible number of sessions attended, the actual number of sessions attended, the number, if any, of unauthorised absences and the child's attendance percentage for the school year overall.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will 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 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

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools 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.

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.
- Holiday PN's are at the discretion of the HT based on the context of the pupil/family and the evidence that the school has gathered – this therefore needs to be done on a case by case basis
- 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

- Home school agreement signed by school, parents/carers and children outlines our expectations of good attendance and punctuality in order for pupils to reach their full potential.
- Weekly 'attendanceopoly' incentive for each class. Each class dependent on improvement from previous week regarding attendance are able to have a roll of the dice and win a class activity.
- Weekly, whole school assemblies celebrate the classes in 3rd, 2nd and 1st place for attendance and highlight those classes who have hit our school target of 96.5% or above.
- Weekly school newsletters provide parents with the top 5 classes for attendance each week and the whole school attendance which is highlighted green, amber or red dependent upon whether it sits above, below or within our whole school target.
- Termly attendance certificates awarded in our special celebration assembly for all pupils securing 100% attendance.
- Punctuality certificates and stickers to celebrate children who are always on time.
- Positive postcards for families who have shown significant improvements in attendance and punctuality.
- Termly and yearly prizes raffles for excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Attendance leaderboard on display in the hall to celebrate class attendance winners.
- Reception New Parents meetings and 1:1 meeting with families transferring in year stress the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Link governor meetings to review attendance strategies and assess the impact of initiatives.
- Staff meetings to raise the profile of attendance and agree shared ownership and a holistic approach. To celebrate the importance of working in partnership with parents on improving attendance and the impact that poor attendance and punctuality has on their learning.

6. Attendance monitoring

The Child Welfare Lead, with support from the Pastoral Officer, monitors pupil absence on a fortnightly basis. However, the Child Welfare Lead has a daily record of absences and in some instances will take appropriate action as and where required for individual cases (home visits, telephone calls, contact other professionals involved with family).

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 a pupil's absence continues beyond 2 days we will contact the parents again 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 (EWO).

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 in a termly report.

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.

At Woodland the link governor for attendance is Mr Andrew Baker.

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: Georgina Bradley (Child Welfare Lead)

- 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 twice 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. The Pastoral Officer undertakes daily first response calls to parents who have not informed school of their child's absence.

7.6 Education Welfare Officer

Woodland's link officer is Yvonne O'Hara 01706 925115 email: yvonne.ohara@rochdale.gov.uk

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Child Welfare Lead and Headteacher. 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

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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