



# **Woodside Primary Academy**

# **Attendance Policy**

**19-20**



## 1 Introduction

The key principles which underpin Woodside Primary Academy procedures for managing attendance are that, regular and punctual attendance is key to the academic and social development of pupils. This will improve the life chances of children and young people; children and young people who attend school regularly and punctually are less likely to be at risk, both in terms of engaging in anti-social behaviour and in terms of their own health and safety and welfare.

This attendance policy is aimed to support Woodside Primary Academy to build on our capacity to improve regular school attendance and attendance practice within our school.

The underpinning principles are to:

- challenge / interrogate our own data to identify patterns and vulnerable groups / pupils
- embed good attendance practise within School, at all levels involving all stakeholders and Governors;
- work with individual pupils and their families to assess and respond to their educational needs and to ensure that young people do not remain disenfranchised from the educational system;
- engage with other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, to ensure that the welfare and protection of all young people remains paramount;
- ensure that all young people have access to educational provision suitable to age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have;
- respond to the educational needs of vulnerable groups and ensure that the safeguarding of all pupils remains at the forefront of all considerations;
- use resources provided to support pupil attendance.

These attendance procedures set out the requirements for schools and other educational settings for the management of pupil attendance and absence. They reflect statutory requirements and the most recent guidance from the DFE.

Regular school attendance is crucial if a child at Woodside Primary Academy is to achieve their full potential. It is important for a child to attend school regularly. If they are not in school they are unlikely to be learning and gaining the maximum benefit from their education. Research shows that raising pupil attendance in schools will contribute to raising achievement.

We expect all our children to attend school, on time every day, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

School aims to have **at least 95.8%** child attendance each term. Attendance targets are known and shared with children, staff and parents.

Children with known irregular school attendance prior to starting at Woodside Primary Academy have this issue discussed with them and their parents/guardian when they are first invited to visit the school.



## **2 Responsibility for Good Attendance at Woodside Primary Academy**

### **Parents, Guardians and Pupils**

Parents and guardians of children of compulsory school age are legally required to ensure that they receive a full-time education. Parents and guardians are also responsible for informing the school of any absence as soon as possible, which should be on the first day of the absence. This can be done by telephoning the school, by personal contact to the school office or by note or letter. They should state the reason for absence and when the child is expected to return to school. Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and to arrive at school punctually. Persistent lateness can be seen as absence and is managed in the same way as poor attendance by Woodside Primary Academy. Parents and guardians should ensure that children arrive at school prepared to take part in the school day.

It is parents/guardian legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive efficient full time education. This extends beyond ensuring regular and punctual attendance and requires that the child is in a fit state to learn. It is the Headship Team and governors, not the parents, who can determine what constitutes authorised absence. A parent may submit a note or other notification in relation to a particular absence but this does not oblige the school to accept it as a valid reason for absence. If doubt remains, the absence will be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil the Borough may be notified.

The school may authorise absences for appointments during the school day, retrospectively where it is satisfied as to the explanation offered but is required to treat absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided as unauthorised.

In addition, excessive amounts of authorised absence are recognised as seriously disrupting the continuity of learning and encouraging disaffection at a later stage. Any patterns for individual pupils or families emerging during monitoring will be investigated.

The school will generally do everything it can to encourage good attendance, but the prime responsibility remains with the parent/guardian.

### **First day of absence calling**

The School expects all parents and guardians to ensure that they advise the school every day of absence. In the instances that parents and guardians fail to do so, the Attendance Officer will attempt to contact the parent or guardian by telephone at least twice (all contacts). If contact cannot be made, a follow up call/text the next day will happen.

Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community at Woodside Primary Academy.

The school has a duty to publish its absence figures to parents and guardians to promote attendance. Equally, parents and guardians have a duty to make sure that their children attend school regularly.



## Ensuring Good Attendance

Staff and governors are committed to working with parents and guardians to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent and guardian.

If a child is absent from School, the absence is categorised by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can authorise an absence not the parents or guardian.

## Ethos

The school use the mind set formed from our **7 Life Values** (Woodside Primary Academy's own values) and the **7 Habits (adapted from 'The Leader In Me' - Steven Covey)**, as a part of the attendance framework to create good attendance behaviours.

Be proactive - Habit 1 (*Pupils are to play an active part in attending school*)

Begin with the end in mind - Habit 2 (*Develop an early awareness of the importance of coming to school*)

Put first things first - Habit 3 (*Be organised and plan ahead to be punctual*)

## Pupil Leadership Board

To ensure that pupils at Woodside Primary Academy contribute and understand the importance of regular school attendance this policy will be reviewed by the Pupil Leadership Board.

Pupils at School are very aware of the link between good attendance and achieving. They appreciate the staff incentives for good, improved attendance and punctuality. Rewards are given and certificates for good attendance and most improved attendance.

## Governors

The governing body of School have a responsibility for attendance at School. This is delegated on a daily basis through the Headteacher, Heads of School, Senior Leadership Team, Teachers and the Attendance team. Governors regularly monitor the effectiveness of attendance policy and practice.

## School Attendance Leader

The designated Attendance Lead is responsible for absence at School.

Each week, children with punctuality and attendance concerns (at risk children) are identified. Investigations are made to understand the nature of the problems, identifying how the school can support parents in meeting their legal responsibility. The School Attendance Officers then liaises with the parent/guardian in the first instance and external agencies including, EP (Educational Psychologists), Social Care and Early Help if the situation is not resolved



## Attendance Thresholds

Thresholds	The following are suggested actions at each threshold:
100%>	Reward regular attendance
<95.8%	<p>Pupils with attendance at, or below, 95.8%</p> <p>For each absence, the attendance officer makes a telephone call to the family home as early in the day as possible.</p> <p>Send a standard letter to parent pointing out the deterioration in attendance levels.</p> <p>Remind the parent of the school's target levels for attendance and the negative effect of irregular attendance on learning. Require the parent to provide an explanation and comments.</p> <p>Keep in contact with parents on a daily basis. Provide encouragement where improvement has been made.</p> <p>Discuss the likelihood of referral to the Education Welfare Service unless improvement is made.</p>
<90% (PA)	<p>Pupils deteriorating to 90%</p> <p>Make first day calls as above.</p> <p>This is referred to as Persistent Absence to the SLT (AHT Meetings)</p> <p>A member of the SLT or Attendance Lead should be involved and should add weight to any interventions already in place.</p> <p>Ask parents to attend a school based meeting with AHT. Use the meeting to investigate why pupil has not attended regularly.</p> <p>Discuss detrimental effect on learning.</p> <p>Reach agreements for rapid improvements over the next half term.</p> <p>Remind the parent that full attendance is the aim and that anything less than 95.8% will cause concern.</p> <p>Monitor attendance very closely and keep in regular contact with the parent, either to praise attendance levels or to show ongoing concern.</p>
<85%	<p>Pupils deteriorating to 85%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If pupil has not been referred to the Local Authority this should be done (if this has not already taken place) and meeting to create a plan of action. (SAP)</li> </ul>



### 3 Authorised Absence

This is defined as:

- When a child is absent as a result of illness and an acceptable explanation has been received
- Religious Observance (as defined in the exemptions list)
- Where a child has had a fixed term exclusion from school
- Medical/dental appointments (sight of appointment card should be requested). **Appointments** should be made **outside of school hours** wherever possible and the minimum amount of time should be taken.
- Exceptional circumstances (unavoidable absence)

### 4 Unauthorised Absence

An unauthorised absence is where the school does not consider the absence to be reasonable or where no reason has been given. It is a parent/carer legal duty to make sure their child/ren is in school.

If a child is not present at the start of the day and the school has not been notified of this beforehand the AO will telephone the child's home immediately to ascertain the reason for absence.

If an absence is not due to sickness or some other circumstance (i.e. it is unauthorised) then a referral can be made to the School Nurse or Local Authority.

All absence by children on Social Services Child Protection Register/Cause for concern list will be counted as Unauthorised and referred to the CP Officer who will take necessary action.

Prolonged absence (more than 3 days) for medical reasons will require medical evidence (in addition to parental notes). This can be a medical certificate or a copy of the prescription. Over the counter medicines will not be sufficient proof.

Where attendance has fallen to 90% and below the member of SLT can request that medical proof is provided so that the absence can be authorised. Parents will meet with the assigned SLT member beforehand to discuss this. Failure to provide medical proof will result in the absence being unauthorised.

The criteria that the school will apply to determine 'exceptional' is a circumstance that has unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs **the** loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another, each individual request will be considered on its merits.

Parents will meet with a Head of School to discuss the request and a decision will be given if the leave of absence is to be authorised. In line with Pupil Regulations the Head's decision is final.

No authorisation for leave of absence can be given retrospectively, which means that permission must always be sought beforehand.



In the event that there is an absence after a school holiday, the school will need to see proof, in the terms of a medical certificate or flight delay. The school will decide if the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

In the event that leave for exceptional absence is granted, any further days of absence will be regarded as unauthorised. The school must be informed in all instances and where the cause is sickness a doctor's certificate must be produced. Failure to advise the school may result in their name being removed from the school roll and the Local Authority will be informed.

### **Request for absence during term-time process**

Parent will request a meeting to discuss the request with the School Headship Team and the Attendance Officer. (Request slip available from the office)



The school Headship Team will consider the request for absence in a meeting with the parent obtaining all the facts. Recommendations will be made to the Headteacher for their consideration.



The Headteacher will make the final decision and put this in writing to the parent.

### **Publications of Attendance Data**

DfE data returns will be produced from the relevant data base in accordance with advice issued by the DfE and the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

## **5 Sanctions for an Unauthorised Absence without Permission**

If a child's attendance falls below 95.8% in any term without good reason, a parent can receive a Penalty Notice or prosecution under the Education Act 1995.8 Section 444 or the Headteacher has not authorised the absence request as detailed above:

- **Fixed Penalty Notices**

Under Section 23 of the Anti-Social behaviour Act 2003, Local Authorities are required to issue penalty Notices to the parent/carer of a child who has irregular attendance, where the absence is unauthorized by the school.

A Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued for unauthorised leave of absence by the Attendance Officer. This will incur a fine per child and per parent being imposed, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. This will rise per child and per parent if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt.



- **Court Proceedings**

If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute and the parent and guardian may receive a criminal record. This prosecution is for the offence of failing to secure attendance at school. Prosecutions are brought under Section 444 of the Education Act 1995.8.

The Attendance Officer can also make an application to the Local Magistrates Court to action court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

## **6 Children Missing Education (CME)**

All children of compulsory school age, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. 'Children missing education' are those who are not registered at a school, not receiving a suitable education otherwise (i.e. Elective Home Education or alternative provision), are not regularly attending the school where they are a registered pupil or cease attending and/or their whereabouts or destination school is unknown. These children can be at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation and in later life becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

### **Tracking and Monitoring**

Information sharing between parents, schools, the community and the local authority is therefore crucial to ensure that these children are kept safe and are receiving the education they are entitled to. In accordance with DfE Statutory guidance, Children Missing Education (Sept 2016) the Local Authority has effective tracking and enquiry systems in place and an appointed named person to whom schools, other agencies and the public can make referrals regarding children who they believe are missing from education. Joint reasonable enquiries can then be made as quickly as possible by schools and the LA. Joint working arrangements are also in place with agencies and services such as, Housing, Health, the Police, and other local authorities.

### **Other LA Responsibilities**

The local authority also has other duties and powers to support their work on CME which include:

- making arrangements to establish (wherever possible) the identities of children in the area who are not registered pupils at a school and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise (e.g. Elective Home Education - EHE)
- arranging education for permanently excluded pupils from the sixth day





- safeguarding children's welfare and neglect the duty to protect them from harm and neglect
- serving Notices and issuing School Attendance Orders to parent/carer(s) who fail to evidence that their child is receiving a suitable education by registering at a school or otherwise. Pursuing a prosecution or an Education Supervision Order for those who do not comply with the Order
- issuing a Penalty Notice, pursue an Education Supervision Order or prosecution of parent/carer(s) who fail to ensure that their child(ren) attend regularly at the school or alternative educational provision where they are a registered pupil

### **Who should be notified of a child missing education?**

Waltham Forest [BACME-referral@walthamforest .go.uk](mailto:BACME-referral@walthamforest.go.uk)

Gurpinder Sansi (Bahaviour, Attendance and child missing in Education)

Tel: 0208495.81719

Email: [Gurpinder.needgan@walthamforest.waltham.sch.uk](mailto:Gurpinder.needgan@walthamforest.waltham.sch.uk)

## **7 Registers**

Registers are to be completed each day by the class teacher.

Registration periods at the start of morning and afternoon sessions will be between the times of 8:50-9:00 Forest, and 9:00 – 9:10 Bridge. Registers should be completed promptly between these times on the computer (in the event of technical issues, the class teacher must make sure to send a paper copy of the register to the office to be register in the computer). Afternoon registers must be completed when the class is back from lunch.

Any pupil arriving after 8:45am Forest and 9:00 Bridge will need report to the office and collect a late Slip. Late slips are used for clarification that a child has arrived via the office and has been signed in at the office by parent/guardian. Failure to sign in your child means they will not receive their morning registration and therefore be seen as absent. For safeguarding reasons this is essential. Any child who walks to school alone and comes to school late will receive a phone call home from the office.

If a child arrives after 8:50am on Forest and 9:05 on Bridge he or she will be marked late (L) in the Register. If a child arrives after the register closes at 9:20am Forest or 9:30 Bridge he or she will be marked as an authorised absence (U) in the Register.

Continuous lateness will be monitored, followed by a meeting with AO and if no improvement referred to the Local Authority and fixed penalty notice will occur.

All messages received regarding absence will be recorded, verbal and telephone messages are acceptable. The messages will be recorded in SIMs so the class teacher can see the reasons

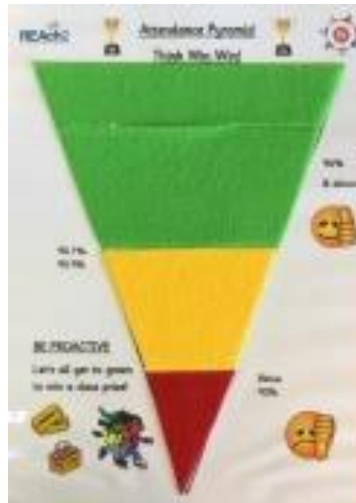


provided. Any letters or notes received by the teacher will be sent to the office to be kept in a file. In addition, any verbal messages given to them will be recorded in the system or it will be passed to an office member. Where a child is sent home ill by authorisation of the office staff/Headship team this will be recorded as "I" and noted in the register.

The office reception staff will contact parents and guardian each morning if their son or daughter has not arrived at School.

## 8 Rewarding Good Attendance and punctuality

### Attendance: Rewards



**Attendance Pyramid** – Each class has an attendance pyramid which monitors their overall percentages.

**Green** – 95.8% above **Yellow** – 91%-95.9% **Red** - 90 % and below.

**Weekly Attendance Assembly** - AHT acknowledges the class with the highest number of pupils above 95.8%.

**End of the Term** – Pupils will be presented with a prize and a certificate for 95.8% and above.

**End of the Year** – The class with the highest amount of pupils in Green, (95.8% and above) these pupils will receive a class prize / trip.

### Punctuality

Good punctuality is essential in order for a child to achieve high attainment and improved behaviour.

- AO keeps accurate records of lateness.
- After 5 days late Attendance Officer will send a letter home regarding lateness.



- Express how much the school cares about children being punctual for school each day and how much a child's learning/class is disrupted due to another child being late.

### **Continued Poor Punctuality**

- Parents /Guardian to be invited into school to discuss the issue.
- Pupil Tracker to be shared with parent and completed by the child (prior)/parent in the meeting
- Where necessary the Attendance Officer may refer the case to Local Authority, which could occur a fixed penalty notice.

### **Continued Poor Attendance will lead to a School Attendance Panel Meeting.**

#### **Objectives - The Attendance Officer**

- Refers to statutory agencies (for example, Local Authority, Early Help, Youth Offending Service, Police, Social Care, Housing) to ensure the welfare of all children and young people at School.
- Work with parent and guardians, children and young people, employing a casework approach, to improve attendance through early intervention and utilising a continuum of support.

**First Day Calling:** AO makes a telephone call to the family home/contact as early in the day as possible for each unexplained absence.

#### **First Attendance Letter from School/Provision: (attendance falls under 95.8%)**

- To parent informing of the deterioration in attendance levels.
- Remind parent of school's target levels for attendance and the negative effect of irregular attendance on learning.
- Require the parent to provide an explanation and comment on the period of absence.
- Discuss the likelihood of referral to the Education Welfare Service unless improvement is made.

#### **Second Attendance Letter from School/Provision: (Attendance has fallen under 90%)**

- Invite parents to attend a school based meeting with Office Manager.
- Inform parent that if there is not an improvement a referral will be made to the Local Authority.

#### **The Attendance Officer:**

- Woodside Notification of Parental Responsibility Letter.

#### **The Attendance Officer:**

- Makes a referral to the Local Authority who will issue a Notification of Parental Responsibility Letter.

#### **The Attendance Officer:**

- Will send an invitation to the parent and other professionals to attend a School Attendance Panel Meeting.
- The Education Welfare Officer will prepare a written report for the School Attendance Panel Meeting.



**School Attendance Panel Meeting:**

- A Head of School will chair the Woodside Attendance Panel Meeting and send the written recommendations to the parent.

**School Attendance Panel Meeting:**

- A Senior Officer from the Education Welfare Service will chair the School Attendance Panel Meeting and send the written recommendations to the parent.

**School Attendance Panel Meeting Recommendations:**

- The School Attendance Officer will monitor and review the attendance in line with the recommendations. If there has not been a significant improvement the matter will proceed to court as below:
- If the matter has been referred to the local Magistrates Court for their consideration without a monitoring period the Local Authority will make an application for court and prepare the Section 9 Witness Statement.
- The Attendance Lead will prepare the court bundle and issue the summons to the parent with the date they must appear in court.
- The Education Welfare Service Court Officer will present the case at court on behalf of the school.
- If the parent enters a guilty plea the matter will be dealt with on the day.
- If the parent enters a not guilty plea a date will be set for trial and the Education Welfare Service will take the stand as a witness.
- If there has been significant improvement the School Attendance Lead, will write to the parent/child praising them for the improvement and if they continue to monitor the case will be closed after four weeks.

This policy has been consulted and ratified by:

<b>Ratified By</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Governing Body	Jessica Laryea	Jan 19
Student Council		
Headteacher	Shane Tewes	Jan 19