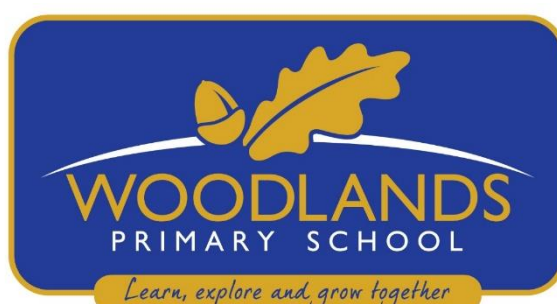


Woodlands Primary School

Attendance Policy



Written by	Rita Tarrant-Blick
Ratified by Governors	Summer 2023
Date for Review	Summer 2025
Signed – Chair of Governors	
Signed – Headteacher	
Is this an internal or external policy?	External
Is this based on a model policy?	Yes

This policy has been impact assessed by Rita Tarrant-Blick in order to ensure that it does not have an adverse effect on race, gender or disability equality.

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Statement of Intent

Woodlands Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at Woodlands Primary School.

1. Aims

At Woodlands Primary School, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the 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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/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](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance). 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](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents) - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents) - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents) - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made) - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/1751/contents/made)

(<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made>)

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

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy
- Overall oversight of attendance
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- 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
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see Section 7)
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Headteacher

- Working with the School Liaison Officer for attendance to tackle persistent / severe absence
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Where a pupil has a social worker, the designated senior lead will inform the social worker of any unexplained absences
- Applying the school's policy fairly and consistently with consideration to the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. This will be with regard to the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010: guidance – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs. Amy Adams and can be contacted via telephone 01732 355577 and / or email address AAdams@woodlands.kent.sch.uk

The Pastoral Support Officer is Mrs. Jo Stone who can be contacted via telephone 01732 355577 and / or email address jstone@woodlands.kent.sch.uk

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. Registers are taken at 08:55 and 13:05 daily. Also see Appendix 2 for class teacher responsibilities.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

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 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence where appropriate to do so, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Work with the school and the local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance

- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day [08:55] and once during the second session [13:05]. 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:

- 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.

The school gates open at 08:30. The doors open at 08:40. The official start of school is 08:45.

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 08:55 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school Office (see also Section 7). This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that their child is safe.

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 with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

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.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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 time necessary.

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:

- After 8.45 but before the register has closed at 8.55, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent/carer, to Acorn school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

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:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may ask the Pastoral Support Officer to make a home visit. Under circumstances where we have concerns for the child's well-being and safety it may be necessary to contact Integrated Children's Services.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- 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 the School Liaison Officer [from the Attendance Service].

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The Department for Education expects schools to regularly inform parents / carers of their child's attendance and absence levels. At Woodlands Primary School this is done 3 times annually as a minimum, or more frequently where there are concerns.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher or designated member of senior leadership 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.

Woodlands Primary 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 to the school office via email or in writing as soon as it is anticipated. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service Personnel returning from a Tour of Duty overseas where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Head Teachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g., poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill

- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family holidays (with some rare exceptions)

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.

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 fine, or penalty notice, each parent 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. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

Woodlands Primary 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.

6.2 Analysing attendance

Woodlands Primary 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
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

Woodlands primary School will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and the Senior Leadership Team, 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

6.4 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 identify 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

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be revised and reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by Mrs. Amy Adams, Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for attendance. The review (and it's approval) will be made by the full governing board.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour 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
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Appendix 2: Process for improving attendance

Attendance Support

The member of SLT responsible for attendance will ensure that families requiring high levels of support will be provided with this using a range of strategies, including support from the Pastoral Support Officer and the Local Authority. Regular analysis of data will be carried out to inform next steps.

Class teachers will be involved and have knowledge of this on an on-going basis, so that they can support the child and family on a daily basis as the person with most contact with the child in school.

Additionally, we will have the following schedule in place:

Date	Support	Staff Member	Description
Term 1 <i>All terms</i> <i>Daily monitoring of pupils with less than 95% attendance</i> <i>Fortnightly monitoring of data and termly analysis of all data</i>	On-going observation	Class Teacher <i>Pastoral Support officer</i> <i>Inclusion Manager</i>	Class teachers will keep an eye on attendance/punctuality and have quick catch-ups with parents and their children where there is an immediate concern.
November	Parent consultations	Class Teacher	Class teachers will share the attendance figure for the year so far with parents and discuss any concerns.
December	Data analysis	SLT member resp. for Attendance	SLT will analyse data and share the names and details of those pupils with attendance concerns with class teachers, highlighting those accessing PP.*
January	Individual Meetings	Class Teacher	Class teachers will arrange to meet with parents of those pupils identified as a concern to discuss the issues. (See agenda, script and strategies sections below)
March	Data analysis	SLT member resp. for Attendance	SLT will repeat the analysis process above, highlighting improvements/new pupils of concern.

March	Parent consultations	Class teacher	Low level concerns will be discussed at these meetings. Higher level concerns will be discussed at separate meetings after Easter.
April	Individual Meetings	Class Teacher	Class teachers will arrange to meet with parents of those pupils identified as a concern to discuss the issues. (See agenda, script and strategies sections below)
End of Term 5	Data analysis	SLT member resp. for Attendance	SLT to analyse data and ascertain impact of support and actions. To be shared with class teachers.
Term 6	Transition meetings	Class teachers and Teaching Assistants	Attendance / punctuality concerns to be shared as part of transition discussions.

*Analysis will include a detailed look at those below 95% and the reasons for absences/lateness and whether these are reasonable (e.g. a long-term illness for which we have evidence). Only pupils of concern will be shared.

Agenda for Individual Parent Meetings:

Before the meeting:

- Class teacher to discuss with SLT responsible for attendance to ascertain latest information

During the meeting:

- Welcome and thank for coming
- Explain the attendance data so far and the impact of this on learning/emotional state/friendships, etc.
- Ask parent to share the situation from their point of view
- Ask what support they think would be helpful
- Agree on an action plan (make notes for pupil's individual chronology)
- Agree on a review date (4 to 6 weeks afterwards)

After the meeting:

- Record on pupil's individual chronology
- Review progress with the parent as agreed in the meeting (4 to 6 weeks after the meeting)

Causes and Solutions:

Cause	Solutions
Travel Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link with another parent/carer who can bring the child to school • Leave home 5 minutes earlier to avoid being 5 minutes late
School Avoidance (anxiety, attachment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies to motivate e.g. beads to make a bracelet, sticker chart. • Use of Anxiety Based School Refusal Inclusion Support Programme - collaboratively completed with all stakeholders • Kent Educational Psychology consultation line to be offered to parent/carer. This is at no cost to the parent / carer.
Repeated Illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure parent/carer understand which illnesses require staying at home
Friendship Issues/Incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure issues are investigated fully and parent/carer knows the situation • Reassure by explaining response/actions in place • Reiterate child's role in the situation

Example Scripts:

Travel Issues	<p>'I understand that you are having difficulty bringing x into school due to car trouble. One possibility would be to link up with another parent to bring him in on some/all of the days. Obviously, it is a parents' responsibility to arrange this so I cannot do this for you, but you could use the class WhatsApp group to ask for help or ask around in the playground.'</p>
Illness	<p>A child may be consistently absent from school due to chronic health conditions or frequent bouts of illness.</p> <p>"If your child is consistently absent due to illness, we would be happy to work with you and your child's doctor to develop an attendance plan that meets your child's needs. Additionally, we can also provide extra support when they are back in school to help them catch up with their work."</p>
Family Issues	<p>Family problems, such as a divorce or a death in the family, can disrupt a child's ability to attend school on a regular basis.</p> <p>"We understand that family issues can be difficult to navigate and can impact a child's ability to attend school. We want to help in any way we can. We can also provide resources and support for your family during this difficult time, and we can work together to develop a plan that helps your child maintain a consistent attendance."</p>
Transportation	<p>Some families may live far from the school or have difficulty arranging transportation for their child to get to and from school.</p> <p>"We understand that transportation can be a challenge for some families. We want to help in any way we can. Can we help you to find some solutions? For example, bus service might be an option. "</p>
Bullying	<p>A child may be afraid to attend school because of bullying or harassment from other students.</p>

	<p>"Bullying is not tolerated in our school. We take all reports of bullying seriously and we have policies in place to address it. If your child is experiencing bullying, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can address the issue and ensure that your child feels safe and comfortable coming to school."</p>
Learning Disabilities	<p>A child with a learning disability or other special needs may struggle to keep up in a traditional classroom setting, leading to poor attendance.</p> <p>"If your child has a learning disability or other special needs, we have a team of specialists in place to support them. We can work together to develop a personalised plan that meets your child's unique needs and provide additional support in the classroom to help them succeed."</p> <p>Link to Mrs Amy Adams, Assistant Headteacher, for advice</p>
Home situation	<p>Some families might be homeless, going through some financial trouble, or lack of adult supervision might be stopping the child to attend school regularly.</p> <p>"We understand that families may go through difficult times. We want to support your child and your family in any way we can. Can we connect you with any community resources that may be able to help? It is important that your child is able to attend school regularly."</p> <p>Link to Jo Stone, Pastoral support Officer, for support</p>
Lack of Interest	<p>Sometimes children may be disinterested in school and may find it difficult to motivate themselves to attend on a regular basis.</p> <p>"We understand that some children may find it difficult to stay motivated in school. We are here to help and support your child in any way we can. We can also connect you with resources that may help your child develop a greater interest in their studies."</p>
Mental Health	<p>Children may face mental health issues and their attendance might be affected.</p> <p>"We understand that mental health is important and it can impact school attendance. We have support systems in place to help children with mental health concerns, such as counselling services. We can work with you to find the right support your child needs."</p> <p>Link to Mrs Amy Adams, Assistant Headteacher, for advice</p>

Document History	
Date	Summary of changes
June 2023	Existing policy reviewed and rewritten in light of new DfE guidance. To take effect from Sept 2023.