



## Attendance and Term Time Absence Policy

### Aim

Our aim is to provide an enriched and secure learning environment in which every child can achieve their full potential across all areas of school life: academic, creative, sporting and social.

### Policy status

Recommended

### Links with other policies:

Teaching and Learning

Safeguarding

Behaviour

At Woodside Primary School we believe that pupils need to attend school 100% of the time to benefit from their education and achieve their potential. This attendance policy sets out what is expected so that this may be achieved.

### THE LAW

The law says that:

- Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their children receive suitable full time education;
- That Local Authorities must ensure that parents fulfil their legal obligations regarding their children's education;
- Maintained schools must allow the LA to inspect their registers
- Schools must report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly. Gloucestershire's Penalty Notice protocol allows schools to notify the LA of any pupil having more than 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence in a ten week period particularly when this absence is on account of:
  - (a) Lateness after registration;
  - (b) Term time holidays without permission

In these instances the LA will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice of £60. Unauthorised absence may lead to the LA taking full court action if attendance issues cannot be resolved. Formal meetings (Attendance Improvement Meetings) will be held with parents whose children's poor attendance may lead to legal proceedings and attendance plans will be drawn up.

### Oct 2017 GCC's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct states:

4.8 There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice. Although this Code of Conduct states that there is no requirement to issue a warning letter before requesting a penalty notice for unauthorised holiday absences, (Code G), parents should have been warned of this possibility in the School Attendance Policy and in other avenues of parental communication which can be clearly evidenced by the school if required.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/carers should:

- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time, appropriately dressed and equipped and in a fit state to learn.
- Let the school know if they are having difficulty with attendance so that any available help or support can be offered.
- Let the school know, by telephoning before 9.30 a.m., on the first day of absence from school, why their child is absent and when they are expected to return.
- Seek permission from school prior to any absence.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.
- Notify school if they intend to remove their child permanently from the school for any reason.

School will:

- Make suitable arrangements for the safe, daily reception of children.
- Be consistent in their attendance practices.
- Keep and mark registers accurately.
- Follow up any unexplained absences.
- Notify parents/carers, at least annually, of their child's attendance level.
- Notify the Local Authority (LA) of pupils who have poor attendance, leave school to be educated at home, go missing, or are excluded.
- Notify the LA and/or the Department for Education of absence figures for the school and, where necessary, individual pupils.

The Head teacher will:

- Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a priority.
- Promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Remind parents at least annually of attendance procedures.
- Analyse attendance data.
- Oversee attendance procedures.

Governors will:

- With the Head teacher, monitor, evaluate and review the attendance procedures regularly.
- Report on attendance statistics when required.

### **SCHOOL TIMES**

We require children to be at school by 8.50 a.m. in time for the start of morning registration. School finishes at 3.00pm. Children should be collected promptly unless they are attending an after school activity. Please inform the school office as soon as possible if you are going to be late collecting your child for any reason.

### **REGISTRATION**

School must keep attendance registers for all pupils on the school roll. The class teacher will call the register twice a day and every pupil will be marked as present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site. It must be shown, by the use of approved codes, whether an absence is authorised or not.

Registration will take place between 8.50 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. for the morning session. Pupils arriving after 9:00 am will be marked 'late'. If a child is not present and a message has not been received, they will have a circle which will be filled in when a phone has been made (see below). Registers will be marked again during afternoon sessions. The marking of registers will be in accordance with instructions set out at the front of the register.

Absence, legally, has to be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised and reported on to the LA. Only the schools can decide whether an absence is authorised or not and does not have to accept the reasons given by a parent or carer.

### **SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

After close of registration, dinner registers will be returned to the office and checked for absences. Where the register shows an unexplained absence and there has been no message received at school by 9.30 a.m. a phone call will be made to the parent/carer to find out the reason for absence and the date of expected return. All telephone messages will be dated and recorded in writing.

If school has been unable to make contact by telephone a written communication will be sent home, requesting the reason for absence. If there is still no response the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where the register shows 5 separate 'late' marks over a school half term, school will contact parents.

Where the register shows 10 separate late after registration marks over the last 10 weeks the Local Authority may issue a fixed penalty notice, without prior warning.

Any concerns about attendance or punctuality will be referred to the head teacher who will, if necessary, contact parents/carers to try to resolve any issues. If these issues cannot be resolved and there is unauthorised absence the matter may be referred ultimately to the Education Entitlement and Exclusion Team at Shire Hall.

### **ABSENCES**

#### **ILLNESS**

Children may be absent from school because of genuine illness. In such cases absence will be authorised. However, patterns of frequent or repeated sporadic absence will be followed up by the school initially, with the LA becoming involved as appropriate and when necessary.

#### **MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

Please try to make appointments outside school hours if at all possible. However, if this is not possible please telephone or send a note into school. Parents will need to collect their child(ren) from school.

**UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE** All absences will be deemed unauthorised until the school decides otherwise, based on the information provided by the parent or carer.

#### **SCHOOL CLOSURE**

In the event that the school is closed at the heads discretion, absences will be recorded as authorised. E.g. adverse weather, no running water.

### **HOLIDAYS**

#### **From DfE: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#). These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

#### **Term-time holiday**

The [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) currently allow head teachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in

“special circumstances” of up to ten school days leave per year. Head teachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. **The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The law (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) states that parents/carers do not have a right to take their child(ren) out of school for a holiday in term time. The Education (Penalty Notice) Regulations 2007 further strengthen the duty on LAs and schools to address the issue of non-attendance robustly. If the parent/carer keeps a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised. Each individual case will be considered sensitively to ensure that the best interests of the child(ren) are met.

If the parent/carer wishes to apply for permission from the Head teacher, a term time leave form must be completed in advance. Holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively. If the school does not agree an absence and the pupil does not attend school during the dates requested, the absence will be unauthorised. If a holiday request is refused but the holiday is still taken, all unauthorised absence will be examined and the appropriate action will be taken following Government/LA guidelines which will/can result in a penalty notice being issued.

### **MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

If appointments have to be made during school hours, school should be pre-notified. Parents collecting pupils from school mid-session should, for safety reasons, notify the office on departure and re-arrival. If present at registration no amendment to the register is necessary. If absent at registration the register should be marked with an authorised absence mark. Again for safety reasons, pupils should report to the office on arrival.

### **FREQUENT ABSENCES FOR MEDICAL REASONS**

When a pupil frequently misses school for medical reasons, medical services may be consulted and appointment cards will need to be provided. Where necessary a referral will be made so that an evaluation of the pupil’s health and educational needs can be made.

### **STRATEGIES**

To support our attendance policy we:

- Will treat attendance as a priority;
- Promote good attendance at every opportunity –at Parents evenings, at Induction, in newsletters, in assemblies, on notice boards etc.
- Always use first day telephone contact;
- Celebrate good and improved attendance;
- Set attendance targets for the school;
- Keep parents/carers informed of their child’s attendance level;
- Make good use of attendance data by specific analysis;
- Notify Governors of attendance levels;
- Provide a safe, happy, stimulating environment for children where they feel valued and welcomed and that their presence in school is important.

### **SUCCESS CRITERIA**

- We are meeting or exceeding our attendance targets.
- Our attendance is in line with, or exceeds that of local comparator schools.
- We have positive feedback from outside agencies such as Ofsted, LA etc.
- Everybody is clear about what to do if a child is absent from school.

## **Equality Statement**

The school recognises that it has to make special efforts to ensure that all groups prosper, including those:

- with special educational needs;
- who have difficulties accessing the school;
- who speak English as an additional language;
- who have frequent moves and/or lack stability leading to time out of school (e.g. children in care);
- who as children are caring for others;
- who come from homes with low income and/or inadequate home study space;
- who experience bullying, harassment or social exclusion;
- with low parental support or different parent expectations;
- with emotional, mental and physical well being needs;
- who exhibit challenging behaviour;
- who come from ethnic minority groups including travellers, refugees and asylum seekers.