



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission Statement

Through a passion for learning rooted in mutual respect and warm, honest relationships our school community provides a platform for success for all.

Woodlands Park Primary School reviewed this policy: 04 March 2019
Endorsed by our EWO, Clare Barnes

Woodlands Park Primary Schools' Local Governing Board noted this policy on: 14 March 2019

This policy will be formally reviewed every 2 years

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'The school will promote and value good attendance through school newsletters, parent consultations, written reports and attendance certificates'.

Rationale

In co-operation with the Educational Welfare Service (EWS), it is the aim of this school to ensure that punctuality and regular attendance will help our children to make good or better progress in all aspects of their learning and standards of achievement are the highest possible as well as our duty to safeguarding them.

Purpose

1. To provide a consistent message to pupils and parents/carers.
2. To ensure continuity and progression in the learning process.
3. To ensure a high standard of punctuality and attendance is achieved and maintained.
4. To provide a safe and secure environment for pupils.

Safeguarding duty

The school has safeguarding duties under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of its pupils which should be read in conjunction with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Legal responsibilities of parents in relation to school attendance (Section 7 Education Act 1996):

The parent of every child of compulsory school age must ensure that he/she receives efficient full-time education suitable to:

- His/her age, ability and aptitude; and
- Any special educational needs he/she may have;

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For pupils registered at a school, this means that pupils must attend regularly and punctually; failure to do so may result in their parents committing a criminal offence.

NB: A child is of compulsory school age on the 1 January, 1 April or 1 September following their 5th Birthday.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 – sections 434(1)(3)(4) & (6) and 458 (4) & (5);
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 amended;
- DfE Statutory Guidance.

Absence

1. Absence can only be authorised by the school for:
 - Sickness or unavoidable cause (solely affecting that child);
 - Days set aside for family religious observance;
 - Where LA transport has not been provided to a child that is entitled to it;
 - Other reasons, approved by the school;
 - Exceptional circumstances (as detailed in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013).

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2. For all absences, there should normally be formal notification from parents (use the 'S2' Absence Request form and supporting letter if necessary). Only the Headteacher (or delegated members of staff) can authorise any absence and may refuse to do so unless it is felt that the absence is justified by one of the reasons stated above. There is no entitlement for avoidable absences such as holidays during term time.
3. In cases of unauthorised term-time absence, the Headteacher can apply directly to the Education Welfare Service to generate a penalty notice warning letter without necessarily contacting the school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). This would be done by completing a Penalty Notice Certificate of Absence Form and returning it to the penalty notice office of the EWS.
4. An attendance rate of at least 93% and above is considered necessary for a child to benefit fully from the education being provided. The Government's recommended figure is 96%. If a child's attendance drops below 90% but is still above 85% the School will contact parents/carers as early as possible to advise them of their child's attendance/persistent lateness and provide appropriate support if required to help to improve the child's attendance/punctuality. Communications with parents is as follows:
 - An individualised letter of concern with the child's registration certificate will be sent to parents for their information. At this time parents are invited to contact the school to discuss their child's attendance to ensure the school is fully informed of the circumstances and can provide appropriate support to our families;
 - Where action taken at school level has failed to improve attendance/punctuality leading to percentage attendance being below 90% for a particular pupil, the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed and appropriate action taken. This will take the form of an official letter from the EWO followed by a meeting.

Punctuality

5. Late arrivals will be actively discouraged. Separate registration codes are required for lateness prior to close of registration and afterwards. It has been agreed that morning registration will remain 'open' from 8.50 am to 9.10 am. In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties schools may keep their register open for a longer period. Late arrival during this period will be coded as 'Authorised Late' (L).
6. Late arrival after the register is closed at 9.10 am is an 'Unauthorised Absence' (coded U) which could provide grounds for prosecution. Where a pupil arrives after close of registration with a legitimate reason provided by the parents, the absence will be authorised using the appropriate code.

Reporting an Absence

7. Parents have a responsibility to inform school of late arrival or other absence before 9.00 am on the day. For absences of longer than one day, parents/carers must call everyday before 9.00 am and then provide a written explanation for the period of the absence on return. When a child is absent for 5 days or more the school will make contact with you regarding the welfare of your child and likelihood of return. Doctor's notes or other form of written evidence should be provided to school after a longer term of absence to ensure the school is fully informed.

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8. Where parents do not provide satisfactory explanation for absence, parents will be contacted by the school either by telephone or letter.
9. All medical/dental appointments must be made around the school day. Where this is not possible an appointment letter must accompany the S2 form as evidence of the appointment in advance.
10. All absence messages, term time appointment requests including appointment letters will be recorded on the school's SIMs database in line with record retention.

Educational Welfare

11. The Education Welfare Officer will be notified in the following circumstances:
 - Unauthorised absence by a pupil of more than 10 half day sessions (in aggregate) in any one term;
 - Attendance of less than 90% by any pupil;
 - Where action taken at school level has failed to improve attendance/punctuality for a particular pupil.
12. When a pupil's attendance falls below 90% and they also have 10 or more unauthorised absences, unless there are extenuating circumstances, parents would be invited to a formal legal meeting.
13. Parents are to inform the school in writing if a child is removed from roll. Details of the new school should be provided, if applicable.
14. If a child leaves school to be home educated, parents will be invited into school to complete an exit form and the school will complete an EWS 10 form to be returned to the EWS.
15. When a child moves from school and no notification is received from another school, the 'old' school should complete a (CME) 'Child Missing Education' form and return it to the EWS.
16. Schools will work with the EWS in supporting children and their families to improve their attendance.
17. Under safeguarding and our duty of care for children, the school needs to be aware of where pupils are, in particular those leaving or arriving on the premises during a session. An appropriate recording system is in place for parents/carers to sign their child(ren) in and out of school.

Reference documents:

The Education Act 1996.
Section 175 of the Education Act 2002
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 amended.
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.
Gov UK – School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures January 2015.
Gov UK – School Attendance November 2016.
DfE Statutory Guidance

Procedure for making a referral to Devon County Council
In respect of Unauthorised Absence

