

Woodston Primary School

Attendance Policy



Introduction

Woodston Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

Ours is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open unless the reason for the absence is exceptional.

All staff (teaching and support) at our school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

A copy of this policy will be available via the school office and on the school website.

Attendance Leader

A member of our staff will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. She/he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so Important:

Learning

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

Attendance
Behaviour Management
Health and Safety
Access to the Curriculum
Anti-bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our newsletters;
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress;
- Celebrate and reward good attendance;

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean attendance in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are the days the school is open for pupils to attend.

Under this judgement a child should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Reception and Intake Induction period

PCC, in line with the Admissions Code, offer all children in the September following their fourth birthday a full time place at school if requested by the parents/carers.

Our School uses a short induction period where Reception aged children are introduced to their formal education by the use of reduced timetable and to assist in their transition to full-time education. You will be notified of the timetable for our Reception children for September in advance.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (i.e. after 9:05am when registers Officially close);
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed;
- Circumstances where children are reported as ill but the school has reason to believe that this is not the case (e.g. absent for holiday) and no medical evidence has been provided (e.g. doctor's appointment card)

This type of absence can lead to Peterborough City Council Attendance Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is NEVER better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parental support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

When a child's attendance falls below 93% a standard notification letter may be sent informing parents that any further absence may lead to their child being considered a persistent absentee.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the School

A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a period of any 8 school weeks (A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year);
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive school days (4 consecutive sessions);
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or above
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification;
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct** which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the day of absence by 9.30am
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Endeavour to contact you on the day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- If unable to contact, we reserve the right to send our Learning Mentor/Attendance Officer to conduct a home visit
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with us;
- Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of Penalty Notices issued to each parent/carer for each child.
- In certain circumstances we have a duty of care to call the Police to perform a “Safe and Well Check”

Our paramount concern is for the *Safety and Well Being* of our children.

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don’t then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The School Attendance Officer

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council Attendance Service. S/he will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the AO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting Peterborough City Council Attendance Service.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Doors close at 8.55am, if you arrive after this time you will need to use the main office entrance.

At **9.05am** registers will be closed and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence (marked 'U' on the register) This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave of Absence

Taking leave of absence without exceptional circumstance in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence **must** be made in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

It is important that you understand that we may **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances**.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

You should be aware that if your child is absent immediately prior to the agreed date of absence, or does not return on the day immediately following the last agreed day, the entire period of leave may be unauthorised and a penalty notice may be issued.

We have a **Leave of Absence Form'** (Appendix 1). There is provision on the form for parents/carers to state the reasons for the absence requested, but absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

The school will not authorise absence in the following additional circumstances;

- Requests for leave of absence where the application is not made by a parent whom the pupil normally resides.
- Where attendance for the current academic year is below 93%
- Any request during the first half term of the current academic year where the pupil's level of attendance for the previous academic year was below 93%
- Day trips or outings

- Any request for a Year 6 child falling during the Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment period (which falls in May each year)
- Any requests that the Headteacher deems to be inappropriate or detrimental to a child's education.
- When legal proceedings have been instigated by Peterborough City Council
- Any requests that are made retrospectively
- Request is for absence during exam or test period (see above)
- A minimum of 4 weeks' notice not given

Parents/Carers should consider seriously the implications of their child's schooling before taking him/her out of school in term time. It would be inappropriate to ask a child to work harder to make up for schooldays lost by term absence. It is our duty to ensure the maximum possible schooling in the interest of the children's progress and levels of attainment.

Celebration of Good Attendance

In recognition of those children that have very good attendance the following practices take place in school;

Attendance Trophy;

- Awarded in whole school, annual achievement assembly, to individuals that have achieved 100% attendance for the year.

Attendance Certificates

- Children achieving 100% attendance for a full term receive a certificate of recognition

Deletions from Register

Under Section 8-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of absence the school is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.

This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and

(i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any exceptional cause;

We ask for parents' support in implementing this policy to provide the best possible education for all the pupils at Woodston Primary School.

Those people responsible for attendance in our school are;

Mrs Jacki Mitchell – Headteacher
 Mrs Jacki Mitchell – Attendance Lead
 Miss Sharon Davey – Office Manager

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Appendix 1 – Leave of Absence Request Form Appendix 2 – Guidance on Attendance

Appendix 2 – Guidance on Attendance

<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Mrs Jacki Mitchell</p> <p>Headteacher</p> <p>Autumn 2021</p>	<p>Signed:</p>  <p>Mr Gordon Knibbs</p> <p>Chair of Governors</p> <p>Autumn 2021</p>
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