

# WOOD FOLD PRIMARY SCHOOL

## PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY



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### RATIONALE

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. In compliance with the Local Authority School Attendance Code of Conduct, Wood Fold Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to reach their potential. The Governors and staff at our school expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. We strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

At Wood Fold we will make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives, Wood Fold Primary school will follow the guidance stated in the Local Authority School Attendance Code of Conduct to ensure an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

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### 1. Aims

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](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). 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](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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 at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **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
- Having an oversight of data analysis

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs L Michael who can be contacted via 01257 400271.

#### **3.4 The attendance manager- Mrs Taylor**

The school attendance manager is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- 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
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance manager is Mrs C Taylor and can be contacted via 01257 400271.

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis using SIMS, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at morning and afternoon registration.

If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Attendance Manager in the first instance who will contact the parents or carer. The Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher will be made aware of the situation, and should it not improve, will contact the parents to arrange a further meeting to discuss next steps/ Local Authority involvement.

### **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
- Transfer calls from parents to the pastoral manager in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **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 before 9:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, 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

If parents / carers are worried about their child's absence they should make an appointment with their child's class teacher, Attendance Manager or the Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher to discuss it.

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. 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:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:30am The register for the second session will be taken between 12:30pm (EYFS) and 1:15pm (UKS2).

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7).

The set procedure for informing Wood Fold school of a child's absence is as follows:

- If you know in advance that your child is going to be absent for any reason e.g. medical treatment please inform the class teacher or school office of the date(s) in writing before the absence begins.
- In cases of unforeseen circumstances, e.g., sickness, please inform the school by telephone (or email) on the first day of absence before 9.30am, and by means of a brief explanatory letter on the child's return to school.
- If the school has not been informed of an absence, we will contact you via phone call (and email should we be unsuccessful in reaching phone contact) on the morning of absence to ascertain why your child is not in school.
- If the school has not been informed of an absence or been unable to contact the family within 3 days, a letter will be sent requesting reason for absence.
- If after 5 days no contact has been made with the school, the Local Authority will be informed.

If, after the child returns to school, no explanation of absence is given by the parents / carers, the school will aim to make contact again. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no explanation can be obtained.

Regular register checks are carried out by the Attendance Manager, Deputy Head and Headteacher. If attendance falls below 90% a letter will be sent home by the Head requesting an improvement and offering support. If attendance rate does not improve the Head will liaise with the Local Authority and the Attendance Enforcement Team who may contact parents / carers by letter, do a home visit or invite parents / carers to a formal meeting. Unauthorised absence which falls below 90% will automatically generate a referral to social services.

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.

### **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.

If you know in advance that your child is going to be absent for any reason e.g. medical treatment please inform the class teacher or school office of the date(s) in writing before the absence begins.

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 amount of 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:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

School begins at 8.55am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Any child arriving later than 8.55am should enter via the main entrance, reporting to the school office. Parents must sign their child/ children in using the Inventory system. A record of children who are late is kept by the Pastoral Manager. A child arriving after this time may be recorded as an unauthorised late. Persistent unauthorised lates will result in an Education Penalty Notice being issued.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work along with vital information from their class teacher. Late arrivals disrupt lessons and can be embarrassing for the child. This in itself can encourage absence.

If a pupil has been late for school on several occasions, letters will be sent home to parents/ carers requesting an improvement and offering support. Parents/ carers may be invited into school to meet with the Pastoral Manager if no improvement is seen to discuss what support can be offered.

#### **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 initiate a home visit
- 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 an education welfare officer

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly reports which accompany the academic report.



## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that it is the duty of a parent to ensure his/her child receives efficient full time education suitable to his/her age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school, or otherwise.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, makes it an offence for a parent to fail in that duty which could result in a parent being prosecuted for failing to ensure the regular attendance of their child at school.

Children are expected to attend for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves the pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (where the school will not approve the absence)

The headteacher 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.

The 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 as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least six weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office and the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

**Unauthorised** absence includes:

Shopping, visiting relatives in both the UK and other countries and holidays in term time.

### 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.

School will complete an Education Penalty Notice request form if a child falls within one or more of these categories within a 12 week period;

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence with under 90% attendance
- 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence
- Persistent late arrival at school

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Wood Fold celebrates good attendance on a weekly basis during the school Celebration Assembly. The class with the best attendance in KS1 and KS2 each week will receive a class certificate which is displayed on the Attendance Notice Board and will also be celebrated on their class Twitter page.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

Wood Fold will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, 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.

Children at risk of falling below 90% attendance, as well as those accumulating late marks will be identified and appropriate action taken. It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The rates of attendance will be reported on the school weekly newsletter as well as class Twitter feeds, and in the termly Headteacher's report to the Governing Body.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

Wood Fold 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

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

Wood Fold will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, 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

### **7.4 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.

Wood Fold will:

- Use attendance data to find 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
- A letter will be sent to inform parents/carers of their child's current attendance and subsequently a meeting arranged
- If attendance does not improve, an Early Help Plan may be opened to support families

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated by the Attendance Manager. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **9. 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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Dear Parent,

**Education Penalty Notice Warning for Non-School attendance**

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Working within a Code of Conduct the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school. If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 12 week period:

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence with under 90% attendance
- 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence
- persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration

you could receive a Penalty Notice of £60 which will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. The Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution (a separate penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each child).

In law, an offence is committed if a parent fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Wigan Council Attendance Service, in conjunction with schools, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

You may also receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

- Your child is stopped on a truancy sweep
- You fail to ensure that your child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

The Local Authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties please contact your school and ask for support. Yours sincerely,

Headteacher