

WOODHOUSE ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

Reviewed: Summer 2016

Review Date: Summer 2019

Principles

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a 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 may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

The attendance and behaviour policy must include procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Education Welfare Service.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness 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:

- **Holidays during term time**
- **Parents 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**

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the

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parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker (EWW) from the County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWW 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 the Local Education Authority.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Registration closes 30 minutes after school starts in the morning and afternoon (i.e. 9.30 a.m. and 2.05p.m.)
- Children must report to the office when they arrive late (after 9 am) and the register will then be amended by the secretaries.
- When a child is late, they must attend a break detention
- When a pupil is marked absent, the office will contact parents by telephone if they have not contacted the school already. If they leave a message and the parents have not acknowledged this by 9.30, the office will check whether the child has now arrived, try to contact them again and if there is still no response, refer to SLT.
- Parents are requested to:
 - Ring a.s.a.p in the morning to inform the school their child will be absent
 - Inform the school of the reason for absence by phone, text, email or letter so that it may be authorized

The school office is responsible for attendance and Heads of Key Stages will monitor attendance through SIMS and action will be taken using some or all of the following:

- Weekly attendance reviews in forms with a prize draw for those with 100% attendance
- Half termly form competition with league table and prize for form with highest attendance
- Termly rewards for pupils with 100% attendance that term such as celebration breakfast
- On-going display of league table target & curriculum attendance
- Reminder letters and phone calls
- Informal meetings with parents
- Weekly mentoring with tutors and/or Pupil Support Centre
- Attendance clinics with EWW
- Parent support worker
- CAF

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- Referral to the EWW from the County Council who will pay home visits. If other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, she can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or three months imprisonment.

Leave of Absence During Term Time

The Principal cannot grant leave of absence for holidays taken during term time. The Principal may grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.

If leave is granted the Principal will determine the number of days the child may be away from school.

Requests received in writing will be considered on an individual basis. However, examples of what might be considered exceptional circumstances are:

- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark on a tour of duty abroad.
- When it is company policy for an employee to take leave only at a specified time in the year (evidence required from employer)
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue (medical evidence required)

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% in any term, without good reason, a referral to the EWW will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

Unauthorised Absences

Changes to Penalty Notices (from March 2015)

Penalty notices for leave of absence (holiday) in term-time.

The evidence of a combined 10 sessions of unauthorized absence (within the last 3 terms, regardless of the academic year) could trigger a Penalty Notice.

There is no longer a limit to the number of Penalty Notices that can be issued to a parent during the academic year.

Penalty Notices for Persistent Absence

Parents whose child is repeatedly absent will now only receive one warning notice period to bring about improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates then no further formal warning notice will be issued and the

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Local Authority can automatically consider the statutory actions if unauthorized absence re-occurs.

Schools follow the staff Local Authority code of conduct for the procedures of Penalty Notices. Details of this can be obtained from here:
<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservices/Attendance/home.aspx>

The local authority will continue to monitor all school attendance and take appropriate action for absences during term time, both to support head teachers in their role and in challenging the small minority of parents who choose to disregard the law.

Fixed penalty notice: The penalty is £60 per parent per child, rising to £120 if the fine is not paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the fine will result in court proceedings. Prosecution: Magistrates can fine each parent up to £2500 per child and costs; impose Parenting Orders and/or impose a period of imprisonment for up to 3 months.

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:
Attendance target of 96%

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Member of staff responsible for attendance: Mrs C Butler

Head of Key Stages: Mrs C McKeown (KS2), Mr P Reynolds (KS3)

First Day Contact: School Office

Educational Welfare Officer (EWO):
Lesley Hogg Tel: 07803207599

LST EWO
K Mellor
k.mellor@staffordshire.gov.uk

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.