

Woodhouse Academy Attendance Policy

Policy Taken from VIP Education Services – updated September 2024

Reviewed: Autumn 2024
Review Date: Autumn 2027

Introduction

At Woodhouse Academy we are committed to working together to ensure all pupils receive the best education possible and to enable them to achieve to the best of their ability. For this to happen, pupils need to be in school to access valuable teaching and learning opportunities.

This policy aims to make clear what is expected of parents and pupils and to assure parents of our willingness to work positively with them if problems arise.

Principles

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. The school will promote the importance of good attendance through the curriculum and personal/social opportunities.

Good attendance by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All pupils should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We will ensure that parents are aware of attendance concerns and work with them to ensure good attendance and punctuality. To support the school in our commitment to improve school attendance and punctuality, we have employed an independent Education Welfare Service – VIP Education who will provide advice and guidance to the school, parents, and pupils.

Pupils are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the pupil. If a pupil 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 and education does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

School staff are committed to working with parents to ensure any problems are dealt with straight away in order for pupils to feel happy and safe at Woodhouse Academy and achieve to the best of their ability. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school and are on time.

For any attendance related concerns, please contact:

Mrs S Stroynowski - Attendance Officer at school
or
Education Welfare Officer from VIP Education.
Their telephone number is available from the school office.

Registration procedures

School opens at 8.30am and closes at 3.35pm.

Schools are required by law 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 is absent, every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. Therefore, information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason e.g., illness, medical appointments, 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 keeping pupils off from school unnecessarily.
- truancy before or during the school day.
- absences which have never been properly explained.
- pupils who arrive to school after the close of the register
- school refusal.
- holidays taken during term time that have not been authorised by the principal.

When completing the register, school follows the DFE Working together to improve school attendance guidance to determine which relevant code to use; [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115447/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance-guidance-19-august-2024.pdf)

The register will be taken in the morning at 8.55am and at the start of every lesson throughout the day.

Morning registration.

The morning register is taken at 8.55am. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 09.25am are recorded as L (Late).

Registration closes at 09.25am. Pupils arriving to school after this time are late - and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence – U (Late after register closes).

Afternoon registration

The afternoon register is taken at 13.45pm. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 14.15pm are recorded as – L (Late).

Registration closes at 14.15pm. Pupils arriving to school after this time are late - and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence – U (Late after register closes).

Late procedures

Parents are requested to contact the school office or use the Arbor app to report the reason for the absence if their child is going to be late and must provide a reason for lateness.

If lateness is a cause for concern, the following procedures will be followed.

1. Parents will receive a letter informing of the concern.
2. If no improvement, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from VIP Education will contact parents to further discuss and offer support and advice to improve punctuality.
3. If still no improvement, parents and pupils will be invited to a meeting with the EWO to discuss the reasons for lateness and to offer support. Referrals to wider support services may be offered if needed. The discussion held will be documented by the EWO and an action plan to improve punctuality will be devised with parents and the pupil during the meeting and a review date set if needed.
4. If no improvement is seen after the meeting has taken place, the school may follow the Staffordshire County Council Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for persistent lateness.

Reporting Absence

If a pupil is absent from school, we ask parents to:

- Report this on Arbor on the first morning of absence and to explain the reason and length of time they will be absent for.
- Reply promptly to any request or enquiry concerning an absence.

If parents do not contact the school on the morning of the first day of absence, a member of the office team will try to contact them to find out the reason for absence. This ensures that the parent is aware their child is not in school enabling the parent, where necessary, to establish that their child is safe. The school may also ask the EWO from VIP Education to establish contact either by telephone, text message or a home visit may be completed. If a reason is still not known after 5 school days, the absence will be unauthorised.

Children Missing in Education

Schools have a duty by law to refer any absence of 20 days or more to Staffordshire LA Children Missing in Education department where they have been unable to establish contact with the parent/pupil or have general concerns about the absence.

To avoid any referrals, parents are requested to inform the school if they are moving house/area or country and to provide a forwarding address, contact number and the name of the new school if known.

Medical Absence

Schools have the responsibility to decide whether an absence can be authorised on medical grounds. If the school has concerns about the level of medical absence that a pupil has incurred, they will contact the parents to discuss it further and to find out whether their GP or other health professional has been contacted.

If the authenticity of the absence is in question or the pupil has a prolonged absence, parents may be asked to provide evidence that their child is too unwell to attend school by providing a note from a medical professional or a copy of any prescribed medication. If the school does not receive medical evidence, the absences will be unauthorised.

For pupils with a mental health issue affecting attendance, Woodhouse Academy follow the DFE guidance [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

For more information on medical absence – [Illness and your child's education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Medical and Dental Appointments

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays whenever possible. If this is not possible, confirmation of the appointment will be required prior to authorising the absence and an M code used on the register to record when the child has attended the appointment.

Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents are expected to return their child to school following the appointment.

Monitoring attendance

The school aims to achieve at least 96.5% attendance each academic year. To ensure this, we monitor attendance regularly.

Our Independent Education Welfare Officer from VIP Education and the attendance officer in school regularly monitors every pupil's attendance. Where there appears to be a particular problem with attendance, the following procedures are applied.

- A letter is sent to parents informing them of a decline in school attendance and the need for this to improve due to the impact on their child's education and social development.
- If no improvement seen, parents and pupils where appropriate will be invited into a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer and school attendance officer to discuss the concerns and to offer support around any possible barriers, problems at home or at school which may be contributing to low attendance. Referrals to wider support services may be offered where appropriate. The discussion held will be documented by the EWO and an action plan to improve school attendance will be devised during the meeting and a review date set if needed.
- If school attendance does not improve, the school may follow the Staffordshire Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for pupils with persistent absence.

Rewarding good school attendance

Attendance is celebrated regularly in school and we are proud of the achievements of students who attend consistently. Assemblies, certificates, form check ins, reward time and end of year recognitions are all ways in which we encourage excellent attendance.

Requests for leave of absence

Amendments to the Education Regulations 2006 make it clear that head teachers should only grant a leave of absence during term time if there are exceptional circumstances to justify this.

If a parent wishes to request leave for their child for any reason, they must apply in advance and in

writing using the 'Request for Leave During Term Time' form which can be found on the school website under 'School Life / Parent Information section.

Where a child does not reside with both parents, it is the responsibility of the parent making the request to inform the other parent. The school will send a letter to the parent making the request informing them if the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

If a request for leave has not been received and we have reason to believe a pupil is on holiday, a home visit may be completed by VIP Education and a letter will be sent to parents requesting medical evidence for the absence. If no medical evidence can be provided, the absence may be recoded as unauthorised, and a penalty notice request sent to the Local Authority.

Changes to Penalty Notices for School Absence from 19th August 2024

The new National Framework introduces consistency in the use of Penalty Notices across England by introducing a new national threshold at which they are considered. The framework increases the amount of the Penalty Notice and introduces a new national limit of 2 Penalty Notices within a 3-year rolling period to break cycles of repeat offending. In line with the guidance, Staffordshire Local Authority will prioritise the 'support first' approach expecting that support will have been offered to families in cases where it is appropriate. However, Penalty Notices can be issued without a Notice to Improve in cases where support is not appropriate (such as leave of absence in term time) or when support has not been engaged with. Penalty Notices are requested by schools and academies and issued by the Local Authority to the parents/carers of statutory school age children, per parent, per child. For example: two children in a family absent from school for a leave of absence may result in each parent receiving a Penalty Notice for each child at the below rates.

(Generally, the DfE states that parents include all those with day-to-day responsibility for a child).

- First offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- Second Offence (within 3 years) - the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Leave of Absence (Holidays) Penalty Notices can be requested by schools for leave of absence in term time for 5 or more days. This can be consecutive absence, or non- consecutive. In line with the National Framework, the Local Authority retains the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, when parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking multiple term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events, or a combination of non-attendance due to leave of absence and unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence Penalty Notices can be requested by schools when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. 'Sessions' are defined as one half day. The fining process will begin **ON** the 10th session (if this is missed). In these circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be sent by the Local Authority on behalf of the school. This will stipulate the support that has already been implemented and the ongoing support that is available to the parent and child to improve school attendance. The Notice to Improve will also detail the expected improvements that must be made over a set time frame to prevent the Penalty Notice being issued. Further

information on the National Framework can be found within Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024. The National Framework comes into effect from 19th August 2024. [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/124211/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_(applies_from_19_August_2024).pdf)

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. Woodhouse Academy will notify the parents of the days the pupil must not be present in a public place. This type of penalty notice is not included in the National Framework and therefore not subject to the same considerations about support being provided or count towards the limit as part of the escalation process in the case of repeat offences for non-attendance.

Where ‘warning/suspicion’ letters are sent to parents under the revised framework, the DfE and county make it very clear that a school is able to issue these based on any related information they receive. It is not the duty of the school to prove the validity of this, but the parent/carer’s responsibility to provide evidence to support a claim, should they feel this is incorrect.

A session is equivalent to half a day in school.

Elective Home Education

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child, school will contact the parent and discuss their reasons in more detail, offering support to deal with any issues raised. If after this time the parent still wishes to home educate their child, the school will inform the Local Authority of the decision to remove the child’s name from the admissions register.

Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record. Prior to deciding to home educate, parents are requested to contact Staffordshire Local Authority Elective Home Education department.

Summary

It is vital to a child’s progress that they attend school as often as possible and that they are on time.

There are strong and proven links between pupils’ attendance and educational achievement. Just 17 days absence from school in a year could mean a drop in a GCSE grade within all subjects.

Impact of absence:

Missed number of days	Missed number of sessions	Missed number of weeks	Missed number of lessons
1	2	0	5
3	6	0.5	15
5	10	1	25
7.5	15	1.5	35
10	20	2	50
12.5	25	2.5	65
15	30	3	75
17.5	35	3.5	90

Every School Day Counts

0 days off school	100%	Perfection
Equates to 2 days off school each year	99%	Excellent
Equates to 5 days off school each year	97%	Good
Equates to 10 days off school each year	95%	Slight Concern
Equates to 20 days off school each year	90%	Concerned
Equates to 30 days off school each year	85%	Very Concerned

5 days absence over the whole year 97% - 100% Good chance of success and progress	20 days absence over the whole year 90% Less chance of success. Harder to make progress	20+ days absence over the whole year Under 90% Detrimental to success and progress
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Every Minute Counts

LATENESS = LOST LEARNING

(Figures below are calculated over a school year)

5 Minutes late each day	3 days lost!
10 Minutes late each day	6.5 days lost!
15 Minutes late each day	10 days lost!
20 Minutes late each day	13 days lost!
30 Minutes late each day	19 days lost!

Be at the classroom on time and ready to learn!

**Appendix 1
ABSENCE AND ATTENDANCE CODES**

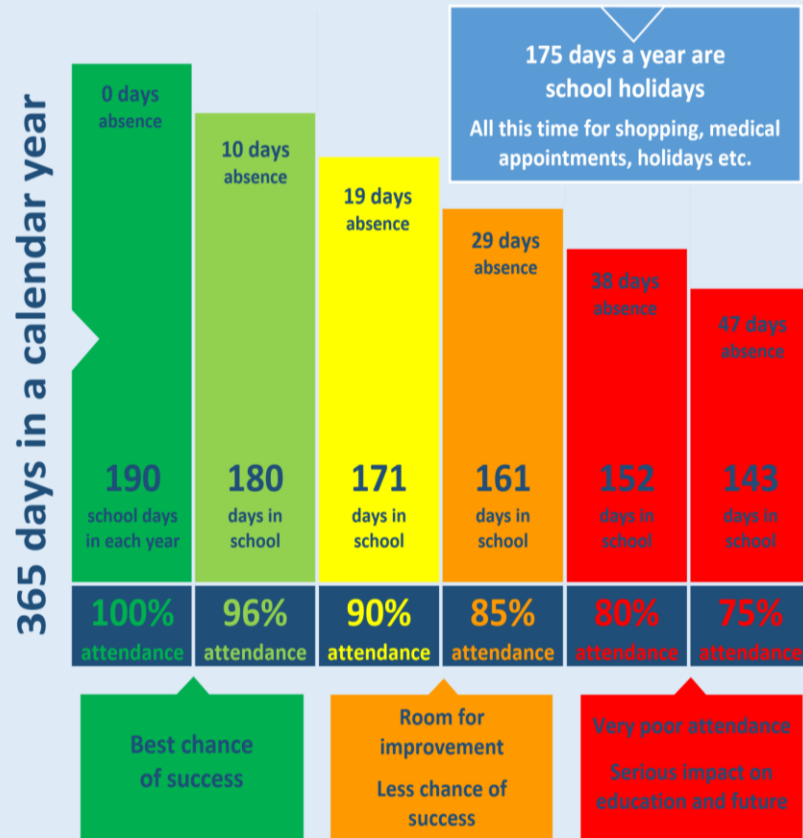
Code	Summary	Rational	Classification of code
/	Present AM	The session is a morning session and the pupil is present at the school when the attendance register begins to be taken.	Attending
\	Present PM	The session is an afternoon session and the pupil is present at the school when the attendance register begins to be taken.	Attending
L	Late in registration time	The pupil is absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended.	Attending
K	Local Authority alternative provision	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the 1996 Act(12) or section 42(2) or 61(1) of the 2014 Act.	Attending an approved educational activity
V	Educational Visit	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the proprietor and supervised by a member of school staff.	Attending an approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity.	Attending an approved educational activity
w	Work Experience	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the proprietor as part of the pupil's education.	Attending an approved educational activity
B	School alternative provision	The pupil is attending a place for any other approved educational activity within paragraph (11) of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024	Attending an approved educational activity
M	Medical Appointment	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.	Authorised absence
J1	Interview	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.	Authorised absence

S	Study Leave	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Study Leave	Authorised absence
X	Not required to attend	The pupil is not of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because their timetable does not require them to attend	Not a possible attendance
D	Dual Registered	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending another school at which they are registered pupil. Dual Registered.	Not a possible attendance
C	Exceptional circumstances	The pupil is absent with leave for any other purpose	Authorised absence
C1	Regulated performance	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Part-time timetable	The pupil is of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because, in accordance with an agreement between a parent who they normally live with and the proprietor that the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis, their timetable does not require them to attend.	Authorised absence
T	Traveller	The pupil is a mobile (i.e. Gypsy, Roma, Travelling) child, their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with that parent.	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	The day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a parent of the pupil belongs.	Authorised absence
I	Sickness	The pupil is unable to attend because of sickness.	Authorised absence
Q	Local Authority failed to make access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements for them within paragraph (12) or (13). Local authority failed to make access arrangements.	Not a possible attendance
Y1	Normal Transport failed	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from school that is normally provided for the pupil by the proprietor or a local authority is not available.	Not a possible attendance
Y2	Travel disruption due to emergency	The pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency.	Not a possible attendance

Y3	Partial school closure	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those who the proprietor thinks cannot practicably be accommodated in those parts of the premises that remain in use.	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Whole school closure	Whole school site unexpectedly closed.	Not a possible attendance
Y5	Child in custody	The pupil is unable to attend because they are in criminal justice detention.	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Public health guidance	Unable to attend in accordance with Public Health guidance or Law	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Other unavoidable cause	The pupil is unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance
E	Excluded or suspended	The pupil is excluded or suspended from the school for any other reason.	Authorised absence
G	Family Holiday	The pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday.	Unauthorised absence
N	Not yet known	The circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established.	Unauthorised absence
O	No reason or unsatisfactory reason	No reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes classified as authorised.	Unauthorised absence
U	Late after registration close	Arrived in school after the registration closed	Unauthorised absence
Z	Not on admission register	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Administration Code, not collected
#	Planned school closure	Planned whole school closure	Administration Code, not collected

Appendix 2

Good attendance means being in school at least 96% of the time (180 - 190 days)



DID YOU KNOW? A two week holiday in term time means that the highest attendance you can achieve is 94.7%

Appendix 3

Staffordshire County Council guidance notes for parents requesting leave in term time

- Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, **complete the attached form and send it to the headteacher/principal**. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. Head teachers/principals cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
- The Department for Education makes it clear that the headteacher/principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers/principals now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
- There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
- Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, in order to ensure that children receive the best education and prospects, they should be in school during term time.
- Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
 - the stage of the child's education and the child's progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
 - whether the parent made the request in advance
 - pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence
 - Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
 - Where parents have children in more than one school, a separate request must be made to each school. The headteacher/principal of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, head teachers/principals may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision- making process.
 - Should the school decide not to grant leave of absence and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent, per child. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.
 - The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support head teachers/principals in challenging parents who ignore the law. Generally the DfE states that parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

The Biddulph Schools' attendance target is 96.5%

The member of staff responsible for attendance Deputy Principal

First Day contact School Office

Education Welfare Worker M Hardy millieh@VIPeducation.co.uk