



METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF CALDERDALE

Woodhouse Primary School

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MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTATION

ATTENDANCE POLICY

	Date	Chair of Governors	Headteacher
Adopted	November 2020		
Reviewed	September 2022		
Reviewed	September 2023		



Achieving Success Together

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1. Aims of the Attendance Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework of guidance which will secure high levels of attendance for all our pupils.

High attendance at school is essential for pupils to make the most of their school experience and achieve their potential including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. Safeguarding as well as educational concerns must be considered alongside school attendance. Poor attendance not only hinders educational progress but may place some children at risk. It is therefore important that we strive to achieve high levels of attendance for all our pupils so that they are happy, safe and successful.

The policy aligns with the school's values: Be United, Be Safe, Be Healthy, Be Caring, Be Bold, Be Creative.

Through this policy the school aims to:-

- Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for every pupil
- Communicate these expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents so that they can be easily understood
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture and ethos that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Continue to provide a welcoming and secure environment where children feel safe, welcome and supported and are keen to make progress in all aspects of school life.
- Ensure admission and attendance registers are completed accurately and effective procedures are in place to follow up absence and prevent further absence
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or groups of pupils that require support with their attendance and put appropriate strategies in place at the earliest possible opportunity
- Support and encourage parents to fulfil their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly by building strong relationships with families, understanding barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Develop effective working relationships with the local authority and local partners to overcome barriers to attendance

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 Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school and championing good attendance
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors and staff
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and promoting good attendance
- Communicating with parents and families about poor attendance
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

3.3 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

- recording attendance on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office at the start of every school session
- promoting good standards of attendance and punctuality
- Communicating the importance of attendance and punctuality to parents
- identifying patterns of absence and/or individual pupils causing concern and notify the SLT

3.4 Admin staff

Admin staff will:

- Take calls and emails from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system using the correct codes
- Follow up any absence when school has not been notified (see first day calling procedures)

3.5 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 advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

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:

- 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.

4.2 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

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

Session times are-	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2	Years 3 - 6
	8.50am – 12.00/12.10/12.15pm	8.50am – 12.20pm
	1.00pm – 3.20pm	1.10pm – 3.25pm

The doors are opened from 8.40am to enable children to be ready for a prompt 8.50am start to the school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:30 when it will close. Pupils who arrive during this time (08:56 – 09:30) will be marked as late (code L). Pupils who arrive after 9:30 will be marked as present (code U) to show that the pupil arrived at school after the register closed. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.10pm.

4.3 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer 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 telephone or email.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. (code I)

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.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance (code O)

4.4 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. Parents should notify the office of any planned appointments via email or telephone. (code M)

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. (see Section 5).

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, first day calling procedures will be initiated (see Appendix 3)
- 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
- A member of the Senior Leadership team will contact parents if the reason for absence is unsatisfactory or unclear. This may result in the absence being unauthorised.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly reports. Parents of pupils whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern will be contacted by the Senior Leadership Team as necessary.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

There is no entitlement to parents to take their children out of school during term time. 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 6 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form (appendix 2) accessible via 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

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.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

5.3 Setting work for pupils who are absent

If a child is to be absent for a length of time, parents often ask if their child can be provided with school work to do at home. If a child is absent through illness, they are often too ill to value any work they are asked to complete, however, the individual requirements of each case will be considered by the class teacher in consultation with the Headteacher. If a child is to be absent due to a holiday, school will not provide work to be completed at home.

6. Strategies for supporting, promoting and celebrating good attendance

- Staff receive training in promoting and supporting good attendance and punctuality
- Staff, including the Leadership Team and Inclusion Support Worker, are on duty in the playgrounds and at the gates before school to meet and greet pupils to ensure they feel welcomed and address any issues before pupils go into school.
- Assemblies will be used to communicate with pupils the need for high standards of attendance and punctuality
- School will work with parents to identify barriers to attendance and put appropriate programmes of support in place, sometimes as a preventative measure, for example making reasonable adjustments for pupils with additional needs or medical conditions.
- In-school barriers such as behaviour, bullying and additional needs will be identified and addressed by the Wellbeing Team who will organise and oversee pastoral programmes to support pupils' attendance and monitor the impact
- Referrals may be made, in conjunction with parents, to external agencies who may be able to provide support e.g. Early Help Pathway, Family Support
- High expectations for every pupil's attendance and the impact of absence on attainment will be communicated regularly to parents via the newsletter, website and on twitter.
- Where pupils have periods of improved attendance, or sustained periods of high attendance, this will be celebrated and communicated to parents

7. Attendance monitoring

Staff are asked to inform the Senior Leadership Team via CPOMS if a child's attendance or punctuality is causing concern. Weekly attendance percentages figures for each class and pupils are calculated and monitored by the Senior Leadership Team.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data 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.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school 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

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers 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.

The school 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 support in school and access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Use the following escalation procedures where attendance is causing concern to prevent persistent or severe absence:

1. Where there are concerns about attendance, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will contact parents/carers to discuss any barriers to pupils' attendance and any support which can be provided by school. A phone call may be made sooner if there are other circumstances e.g. previously poor attendance, persistent absentees, reason for absence not clear/valid.
2. A 'Notice to improve' letter will be sent home to parents/carers of pupils whose attendance falls below 96% at the end of a half-term.
3. If attendance falls below 90%, parents will be notified by email (October half-term onwards).
4. If attendance does not show signs of improvement, parents will be contacted by a member of the Senior Leadership team and may be invited to an attendance panel.
5. If attendance remains of significant concern, a referral will be made to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. 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
- Medical Needs policy
- SEND 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
Authorised absence		
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
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

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

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DURING TERM TIME

This form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the school as far in advance as possible and at least **6 weeks** before the first date of the period of leave being requested. Parents/carers must obtain the school's permission **before making any arrangements for leave in exceptional circumstances, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right.** The Education regulations state that applications for leave must be made in advance by a parent with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each application is considered individually by the school.

Please note: Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional

Headteachers must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Where a Headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is final. Parents who take a child on leave in term time without the permission of the school risk being issued with a penalty notice fine for unauthorised absences.

Taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt educational progress. Before completing this application parent/carers are asked to consider the effect on their child's continuity of education.

Work will not be set for pupils who are absent from school due to holidays.

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DURING TERM TIME

Name of pupil(s):

Class(es):

I request permission for my child to be absent from school

From.....To.....Total school days.....

Exceptional circumstances for request:

(this section must be answered in full and against stated criteria)

Signature of parent/carer.....Date.....

For school use only

Attendance last year..... Attendance present year

Previous unauthorised absence.....

Seen by Headteacher (signature).....Date.....

Decision reached.....

Date reply returned.....

Appendix 3

Emergency contact and First day calling procedures

Emergency contact forms are updated annually and parents asked to provide four contacts (two as a minimum).

First-Day Calling Procedure

- 1) Registers checked by office administrator or admin assistant
- 2) Late children checked against registers
- 3) Absence calls listened to/attendance emails checked/Leave of absence requests checked
- 4) Text sent to first name on contact list within one hour of school start time asking for response
- 5) If no response to text start calling first name on contact list within 90 minutes of school start time
- 6) Ring down contact list until reply is received, ensuring where possible that someone from outside of the family home has been contacted
- 7) Alert HT/DSL that this child is absent and no contact has been made within two hours of school start time
- 8) If no reply send second text and email to first and second contacts on list
- 9) Contact any other agencies involved to ascertain whether they have any further information which may be helpful, or know the whereabouts of the child or family, and contact MAST to see if there has been any incident that they are aware of
- 10) Home Visit made if possible/appropriate by school or other agency involved
- 11) Complete Risk Assessment:
- 12) If assessed as 'No Apparent Risk' – as a school you can make the decision to continue to make enquires and not contact the police if you do not feel that this is necessary or proportionate. These cases should not be ignored and must be monitored over time and consideration given to escalation if there is a change to the circumstances that has increased the level of risk
- 13) If assessed as 'Low/Medium Risk' – contact the Police on 101 and complete the referral checklist (*please also see Key Information on last page of this procedure*)
- 14) If assessed as 'High Risk' and there is a need for an immediate response then contact the Police on 999 (*please also see Key Information on last page of this procedure*)
- 15) School enquiries continue and any further information shared with Police

Risk Assessment

(to accompany referral to Police 101)

Date _____ Name of School: _____

Contact Name & Number: _____

- 1) First day text sent to first name on contact list at _____am:
 - a. Name: _____ Number: _____
- 2) No response received to text so called first name on contact list at _____am
- 3) No contact made so rang down contact list
 - a. Name: _____ Number: _____
 - b. Name: _____ Number: _____
 - c. Name: _____ Number: _____
 - d. Name: _____ Number: _____
- 4) No reply so sent second text and email to first and second contacts at _____am
- 5) Other agencies involved with child:

- 6) Any information from MAST? _____
- 7) A Home Visit was made at _____am to the following address:

By (please tick):

- a. School []
- b. Other agency (please specify) _____ []
- c. It has not been possible to do a Home Visit []

Comments regarding home visit or reason why home visit has not been done:

- 8) Child is assessed as Low/Medium Risk []