

WOODGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Written by: Emma Williams – Attendance Officer
Agreed by Governors on:
Review Date:
Reviewed:

About this Attendance & Punctuality Policy

This document sets out the expectations for school attendance and punctuality at Woodgate Primary School, the aims of the school in achieving regular attendance and the arrangements for registration and absence

Expectations

At Woodgate Primary School we know that regular school attendance is **key** to pupils learning effectively. Good attendance and punctuality are vital if pupils are to benefit fully from opportunities which our school offers them. The target for attendance is 96%, which means that no more than 7 days are missed in an academic year.

It is important too, that children arrive and leave school on time.

It is equally important that children should not be at school if they are unwell.

Woodgate Primary School is a happy school. We know that children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All staff show concern and care about each child's welfare. Children who are denied access to the curriculum are particularly at risk of educational failure and as a direct consequence failing to fulfil their potential in the economic and social life of the community.

As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, the school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents. As in all areas of school life, we encourage a partnership between home and school to promote a regular and punctual pattern of attendance for all our pupils.

At Woodgate the attendance ethos is based around pupils striving to be Attendance H.E.R.O's

H ere
E veryday
R eady
O n Time

Aims

- 1 – To provide an environment which is happy, safe, supportive and encourages learning.
- 2 – To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, staff and Governors and to work together on attendance issues.
- 3 – To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils and ensure that everyone understands the procedures for attendance.
- 4 – To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- 5 – To promote effective partnerships with other services and agencies in order to raise school attendance figures.
- 6 – To ensure parents understand their legal responsibilities for ensuring their children attend the school regularly and may risk prosecution if they fail in this responsibility.

Arrangements for registration and absence

Procedures for Registration

Electronic registers are marked at the beginning of the morning and afternoon school sessions. Any child not present when the register is taken is marked as absent (unknown).

Morning registers are open from 8.45am. A child will be classed as late if they arrive to school after 9am. After 9am pupils will be required to sign in at the main school office, providing a reason for late arrival.

Morning registers are closed at 9.30am and any child arriving after this time will be marked with the U code (late arrival after the registers closed – unauthorised code) unless the reason for late arrival is that they have attended a medical appointment. Parents should provide evidence of this medical appointment to the main office when they sign in.

Procedures for Absence

Parents should contact the school by telephone on the first and subsequent days of absence before 9.30am to notify the school of the reason for their child's absence. They should leave a message on the absence reporting line or call and speak directly to a member of staff should they prefer.

If the school is not provided with a reason for the absence by this time, a member of the office staff will notify the parents via a Groupcall Xpressions push notification, SMS message or email and if no response received they will then attempt to contact parents by telephone.

Reasonable attempts will be made to establish the reason on the first day of absence. If no reason can be recorded for a single day's absence in a school week, a note may be sent home via the child's book bag at the end of the school week or the next day they are in school asking the parent to contact the school regarding the absence. If there is no response to this note, the absence will be recorded as O - unauthorised. It remains the parent's responsibility to contact the school and explain why their child is absent.

Consecutive absences

When an absence occurs for 3 consecutive days, the parent has not notified the school of the reason for absence and the school have exhausted attempts to contact the parents/other contacts by telephone a home visit will be conducted by school staff. This will usually be made by the Attendance Officer and Home School Link Worker. If the pupil is deemed to be vulnerable or there are already concerns over attendance, this home visit may take place on the first or second day of absence. If there is no answer at the home address, a note will be left advising that the school has attempted to make contact and asking the parent to call the school urgently. On return to the school the staff member will log the concern with the Designated Safeguarding Lead via the MyConcern safeguarding portal. If after 2 hours the parent has not responded to the note left at the property the police/Children's Services will be notified and a safe and well check will be requested.

Medical appointments

The school expects parents to arrange routine medical appointments outside of school hours so that disruption to learning is kept to a minimum, however we understand that some appointments, particularly those organised by hospitals, may fall within the school week. In these circumstances we request that a copy of the appointment letter is provided to school to support the absence. If an appointment falls on a school day we would ask for the pupil to attend as much of the school day as possible, bringing them into school before and after the appointment, if there is sufficient time to do so.

Leave in term time

Family holidays should be planned during school holidays only. Leave in term time will not be authorised by the Head Teacher unless there are exceptional circumstances. Should a parent wish to take their child out of school during term time for a holiday or other reason such as a wedding/funeral, they are required to complete a term-time leave of absence request form which can be obtained from the school office. The requests should be completed at least two weeks before they are due to leave. Parents must contact Woodgate Primary School and allow the Headteacher to consider the request before booking flights or leaving the country if possible, even when unforeseen events occur. If that is not possible parents should contact the school at the commencement of the leave.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interests of the pupil nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. School and school relationships can provide pupils with stability and care during difficult times.

If leave is granted, the Headteacher is the person who determines the number of school days a child can be away from school. The parent will be notified in writing of the Leave of Absence Agreed along with an Agreed Authorised Leave of Absence Home-School Contract.

If the Headteacher decides not to approve a request for leave, parents will be notified in writing with the relevant 'Leave Denied' letter

The Local Authority may issue a penalty notice to parents who take leave in term time which has not been approved by the Headteacher.

Under the National Framework for Penalty Notices, penalty notices may only be issued twice to a parent in relation to a particular child within a three-year period. The first penalty notice can be paid at the discount level of £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 between day 22 and 28. A second penalty notice must be paid at the full amount of £160 within 28 days as the discount does not apply for a second offence. If a third offence is committed the local authority cannot issue further penalty notices and must consider other forms of enforcement action such as prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Definition of Parent: Section 576 of the Education Act 1996: A 'parent' in relation to any child or young person, includes any person:- a) all natural/adoptive parents, whether they are married or not; b) who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for him; or c) who has care of him.

Procedures for dealing with poor attendance/attendance issues

Woodgate Primary School encourages regular communication between home and school and promotes an ethos whereby parents work with the school to resolve matters of poor attendance and punctuality. This is referred to as 'Support First'.

All children of compulsory school age are entitled to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

An Attendance Officer and a Home School Link worker are based at the school to support families if they are experiencing any difficulties affecting school attendance. This can be through informal meetings, via offers of Early Help or in a more formal school meeting.

The school hopes that every pupil will be able to attend school every day. Should attendance drop below 90% a pupil is classed as a 'persistent absentee'. The Attendance Officer or Home School Link Worker will contact parents to discuss concerns about attendance where a child's attendance level has dropped below target.

The school has a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data. School attendance figures are monitored on a weekly basis by way of an attendance tracker. Pupils under 90% and whose attendance has dropped in that particular week will be addressed as a priority.

The school will either call the parent or issue a letter in the first instance to advise parents that attendance is of concern. Should there be little or no improvement, parents will be invited to a meeting in school to discuss their child's attendance in more detail and will be offered support.

If support is refused or the support offered does not result in a sustained improvement to attendance and there is any further unauthorised absence, the school will look to 'Formalise Support' and the parent will be invited to a Formal Attendance Meeting.

If after this point there is still no improvement, a referral may be made to the Education Legal Intervention Team within Birmingham City Council. The programme is monitored and led by the Designated Liaison Person for the school, currently Emma Williams, Attendance Officer.

Communication

Expectations around punctuality and attendance are given to parents in the School Prospectus. Parents are asked to sign an 'Attendance Pledge' at the point of admission, confirming that they understand and agree to the attendance and punctuality expectations of the school.

Woodgate Primary School will send letters at the start of each academic year advising parents of their legal responsibilities for attendance.

The school publicise school attendance figures via their website, twitter account, text messages and termly newsletters.

The school will send out a termly attendance newsletter which will include details of any legal action taken regarding poor attendance/leave in term-time such as penalty notices issued by the Local Authority.

Procedures for praise

All children should aim to have an excellent attendance and punctuality record for which there will be appropriate rewards as follows:

Children are rewarded for being an Attendance H.E.R.O by achieving points for attending school everyday and on time. Points can be redeemed for a prize at the Attendance Prize Counter at regular intervals throughout the school year.

A praise assembly is held weekly and the class with the highest attendance level is awarded with a trophy to retain for the next school week and cakes for pupils.

Pupils will be given a sticker at the end of each week to reward 100% attendance during that week.

Individual 100% attendance certificates and medals are also given at the end of the year.