WOODGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Written by: Emma Williams – Attendance Officer
Agreed by Governors on: Awaiting Ratification
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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.

Attendance is everyone's responsibility.

We believe that strong attendance is best achieved through partnership. By adopting a 'support first' approach, we work collaboratively with pupils, families, the local authority, and community partners to understand and overcome any barriers to attendance, helping every child attend school regularly and thrive.

The names and roles of key staff involved with attendance are:

Attendance Champion	Mr P Jones
Attendance Officer	Mrs E Williams
Local Authority School Attendance Team Named Officer	Mrs G Smith
Designated Safeguarding Lead/SENCO	Miss D Carroll
Early Help Lead	Mrs H Davies

Expectations

At Woodgate Primary School, we aim for every child to achieve at least **96% attendance**, which equates to no more than **seven days of absence** across the academic year.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to a child's success at school. Arriving on time each day ensures that children are settled, ready to learn, and do not miss valuable teaching and learning opportunities. Equally, children who are unwell should remain at home to recover and prevent the spread of illness to others.

Woodgate Primary School is a happy, nurturing environment where children are encouraged to thrive. We know that children learn best when they feel safe, supported, and valued. Our staff are committed to promoting the wellbeing of every child and work hard to ensure that all pupils can access the opportunities available to them.

Poor attendance can have a significant impact on a child's education, affecting academic progress, confidence, friendships, and future opportunities. Children who miss school regularly are at greater risk of falling behind and not reaching their full potential.

Because attendance is fundamental to successful learning and continuous progress, we place a strong emphasis on promoting excellent attendance through regular communication with parents and carers. We believe that achieving good attendance is a shared responsibility, and we value the partnership between home and school in establishing positive attendance habits and ensuring every child attends school regularly and punctually.

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

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

In accordance with **The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**, Woodgate Primary School is required to keep an accurate attendance register. A register is taken at the start of each morning and afternoon session. The register provides a legal record of pupil attendance and is used to monitor attendance patterns, identify concerns at an early stage, and ensure that appropriate support is provided to pupils and families where needed.
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 (L code) 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.

The significance of the U code is that the pupil is marked as having **missed the entire session**, even if they attend for the rest of the day and U codes contribute to a pupil's **unauthorised absence percentage**, which can affect overall attendance figures.

Procedures for Absence

Parents should contact the school by telephone on 0121 464 2315 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. Parents should be aware that incoming messages on Groupcall are not routinely monitored and therefore absence reporting via Groupcall should be avoided.

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 Family Support 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 a conversation and 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, such as dental and opticians' 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 evidence of the appointment is provided to school to support the absence. This could be a medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, copy of a prescription, print screen of medical notes or screen shot from the NHS app. 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.

Punctuality

Regular and punctual attendance is essential if children are to benefit fully from their educational opportunities. Arriving late can be disruptive to both the individual pupil and the class and may result in lost learning time. The school will monitor punctuality closely and work with families to identify and address any barriers to arriving on time. You may not be aware that the law treats some persistent lateness in the same way as unauthorised absence and parents may be prosecuted or receive a penalty notice from the local authority if late arrival is not resolved. This has been further strengthened in regulations which came into force in September 2024.

Minutes late per day during the school year	Equals days' worth of teaching lost in a year
5 mins	3.4 days
10 mins	6.9 days
15 mins	10.3 days
20 mins	13.8 days
30 mins	20.7 days

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 day 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.

Children Missing in Education

In line with Birmingham City Council's Children Missing Education procedures, the school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of any pupil who ceases to attend school. Where a child's whereabouts cannot be established and all appropriate checks have been completed, a referral may be made to the Birmingham Children Missing Education Team. The school will work in partnership with families and external agencies to ensure that every child receives their entitlement to a suitable education.

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 Family Support 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 Family Support 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, monitoring and analysing attendance data. Attendance is reviewed weekly through the school's attendance tracker, enabling early identification of any concerns. Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% and has declined during that week are prioritised for support and intervention.

The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of pupils with attendance below 90% throughout the academic year. This is particularly important where absences are unauthorised (see below), as persistent absence can have a significant impact on a child's educational progress, wellbeing and engagement with school.

The school will initially contact parents either by telephone or in writing if attendance becomes a concern. The purpose of this contact is to make parents aware of the attendance concerns at an early stage and to offer support to help improve their child's attendance.

If attendance does not improve, parents will be invited to meet with school staff to discuss any difficulties or barriers that may be affecting attendance. The school is committed to working in partnership with families to identify appropriate support and develop a plan that promotes regular attendance and positive outcomes for the child.

Details about the extensive Early Help Offer at Woodgate Primary School are detailed below.

Where support is declined, or where attendance does not show a sustained improvement despite the support offered, and there is further unauthorised absence, the school may need to move to a more formal stage of the attendance process. Parents will be invited to attend a Formal Attendance Meeting so that ongoing concerns can be reviewed, support options considered, and the importance of regular attendance reinforced.

If attendance does not improve despite the support and interventions offered through the school's graduated approach, the case may progress in line with the **Support First Attendance Framework and Birmingham City Council guidance**. At this stage, where unauthorised absence continues and all appropriate support strategies have been explored, a referral may be made to the Education Legal Intervention Team at Birmingham City Council for further consideration.

The school remains committed to working in partnership with families throughout the process, with the aim of identifying and addressing any barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity. Formal intervention is considered only when supportive measures have not resulted in sustained improvement.

The school's attendance procedures are monitored and coordinated by the Designated Liaison Person, currently **Emma Williams, Attendance Officer**, who oversees attendance

support, intervention strategies and the implementation of the Support First Attendance Framework within the school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised when no acceptable reason has been provided, or when the reason given does not meet the criteria for authorised absence as set out in the **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**.

Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- Shopping trips, birthdays, or family outings.
- Term-time holidays or leave of absence that has not been authorised by the Headteacher.
- Staying at home to care for siblings or relatives.
- Oversleeping or missing transport without exceptional circumstances.
- Arriving at school after the register has closed without an acceptable reason.
- Keeping a child off school due to minor ailments when they are well enough to attend.
- Absence where no reason has been provided by the parent/carer.
- Absence where the school has not been able to verify the reason provided.

Unauthorised Attendance Codes

Code	Meaning
G	Unauthorised leave of absence for a family holiday or other leave not granted by the school.
N	Reason for absence not yet established. This code should be replaced once enquiries have been completed.
O	Unauthorised absence where no satisfactory reason has been provided.
U	Arrived after the register closed.

Communication

Expectations around punctuality and attendance are given to parents in the School Prospectus and annually via the Good Attendance Matters! Information for Parents Leaflet.

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.
The school publicise school attendance figures via their website, X 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.

Good Attendance Matters leaflet

GOOD ATTENDANCE MATTERS!



Every school day counts



IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

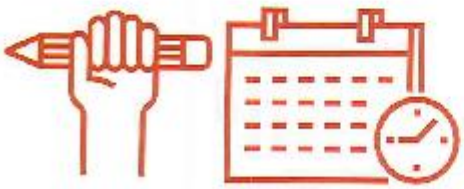
Why is regular school attendance and good punctuality so important for my child?

Regular attendance at school means that your child can make the most of their education and improve their chances in adult life. School can also help your child's social skills such as making and developing friendships.

The link between attendance and attainment in school is clear. The more a child is in school the more they increase their opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Good punctuality is important. For example, if a child arrives 15 minutes late at school each day, they lose almost 2 weeks of education over the year. Good punctuality also helps your child get into good habits for when they enter the world of work.

Lateness can cause your child embarrassment and, in some circumstances, can count as unauthorised absence.



How can I help my child enjoy school and attend regularly?

Be organised, have a plan, be consistent and involve your child!

You should:

- ensure they have an appropriate bedtime routine
- create good routines for mornings at home so that your child can arrive punctually and are properly equipped;
- avoid absence from school wherever possible – try to make doctors and dental appointments out of school hours
- make time to encourage and show interest in school work, friendships etc.
- attend school open evenings and functions
- Create a calm space for them to do homework, check they understand the homework and that it has been completed.
- share any education concerns your child or you may have with the school staff as soon as possible
- set realistic boundaries

1/2

Holidays/Leave in term time

Holidays in term time are not allowed. Parents/carers must apply for the authorisation of any leave prior to travel or their children could be reported to the council as missing in education.

Leave for other circumstances such as bereavement or family illness abroad may also not be authorised. Informing the school does not mean the leave is agreed. In the event of a genuine family emergency, parents should avoid requesting more than 5 school days absence. Leave due to weddings is unlikely to be authorised.

Two weeks unauthorised holiday/leave means at least 50 lessons missed that will never be repeated.



What does the law say I must do as a parent/carer?

Once your child is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. This means your child should not have any unauthorised absence as this would constitute an offence in law.

When attendance doesn't improve after support or, when a minimum of 5 days unauthorised holiday/leave is taken, legal action can be taken.

Courts can fine parents/carers up to £1,000 per child and for repeat offences the court can fine parents/carers up to £2,500 per child or impose a prison sentence of up to 3 months.

In many cases, but not all, parents/carers can discharge an offence by paying a penalty notice of £160 for each parent per child, discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days. For a family of two parents/carers with 3 children that would be at least £480.

Where can I get help and advice?

If you need support in relation to your child's attendance, help is available. Please make an appointment with the school to discuss your concerns.

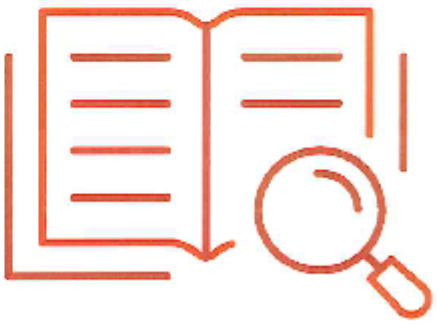
Most difficulties can be resolved informally, but the staff can also arrange an early help assessment or make a request for support to Birmingham Children's Trust if necessary, with your consent.

School nurses can also be helpful if your child has a medical condition or has a lot of time off due to illness.

Parents/carers are strongly advised to work in partnership with the school to address any difficulties impacting school attendance. For more information about school attendance or if you need help or support, please use these links:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/saap

www.birmingham.gov.uk/love



Birmingham City Council

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Early Help Offer at Woodgate Primary School

WOODGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Head Teacher: Mrs D Colley, B.Ed (Hons)
Lulley Grove, Bartley Green, BIRMINGHAM, B32 3PN
Email: enquiry@woodgate.bham.sch.uk
Telephone: 0121 464 2315

Dear Parents and Carers,

At Woodgate, we are committed to supporting our school community in every way we can. We would like to let you know that we have both a **Food Pantry** and a **Pre-Loved Uniform Wardrobe** available for all families to use whenever needed. This includes shoes, coats and PE kits.

Our **Food Pantry** is stocked with a selection of essential items, and families are welcome to access it at any time—no appointment necessary. Likewise, our **Pre-Loved Uniform Wardrobe** offers good-quality school uniform items that you can take or swap as needed.

These resources are here to help, without judgement, and are open to everyone in our school community. If you would like to use either service or would like further information, please feel free to speak to a member of staff at the office.

In addition to these offers, we would like to tell you about our **Early Help Offer** at Woodgate Primary School. Early Help is available for any family who may need extra support, guidance, or someone to talk to. Harriet Davies, Family Support Worker, can offer a wide range of services and can also signpost you to the right agencies to ensure you receive the help that best meets your family's needs.

As part of our Early Help Offer:

- **Citizens Advice** visit our school once every term. They can support with matters such as finances, benefits, housing, and general guidance.
- We run **parent courses**, including **ESOL** for parents who speak English as an additional language, helping to build confidence in communication and everyday English skills.
- An active **parent inclusion group** for parents of children with additional needs providing a network of support.
- For parents who may be finding children's behaviour challenging, we offer the **PI (Psychologically informed Parenting Course)**—a supportive programme that introduces new ways of managing and responding to behaviours in a positive and effective way.
- Support for a variety of issues which may affect your ability to ensure regular school attendance for your child.

Please remember that all of these services are here for any family who may benefit from them. If you would like more information or wish to access support, please don't hesitate to speak to Harriet Davies our Family Support Worker.

We will look forward to welcoming you into the Woodgate community.

Kind regards,

Woodgate Primary School.

Support First Process

