

# **Woodthorpe J.I. School**

## **Attendance Policy**

Woodthorpe J.I. School is committed to ensuring that all our pupils attend regularly and achieve their full potential. We believe we offer a caring and stimulating environment in which everyone can feel happy, secure and valued.

Our Attendance Policy depends on an active partnership between pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors who work together and share expectations. All our staff believe it is important our pupils come to school regularly and on time, so that they can enjoy continuity and progression in their learning and disruptions to the class are kept to a minimum.

At all times we are conscious of the many differing cultures, traditions and religions of all concerned.

### **Aims**

Our aim at Woodthorpe JI School is for all pupils to come to school on time each day and take an active part in school life, in order that they fully benefit from the educational opportunities offered by the school.

- To develop supportive strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality
- Raise pupil, parent and staff awareness of the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality
- To set ambitious targets for attendance annually and submit data to the LA
- Use attendance data to identify and address any trends of individuals or groups
- Reduce unauthorised absence/ leave of absence within a legal framework (FAST-track to Attendance (See Appendix 1) / Term Time Leave)
- Reward regular/ improved attendance and punctuality
- Take steps to provide learning for pupils unable to attend school due to serious health issues (and support their return to school)

### **Procedures for dealing with absence (including unreported absence protocol)**

1. On the first day of absence, parents are expected to call the office and provide a reason for absence. If no contact is made, a phone call is made to children's parents/ the primary contact number and a record of the outcome is recorded in the office's attendance log book. Class teachers and Designated Lead Person for attendance (DLP)/ Attendance Officer are informed of reasons for absence.

2. If the first day contact telephone call has been unsuccessful in establishing a reason for absence, a text message is sent to parents asking them to contact the school immediately with a reason for absence. If there is still no response the DLP or senior management are informed (a home visit may be made to check the well-being of missing children).

3. If absence continues (after 3 school days) with no reason, the office will inform the DLP and a letter will be sent home asking for a reason for absence. Failure to contact school within 10 days may trigger a home visit and a letter will be sent

requesting an expected return to school date, with consideration of continuation of school place.

4. If the reason given for a particular absence or period of absence causes concern, the child's name and details are referred to the DLP, who will pursue the matter.

5. Pupils with a record of persistent absence (below 90%) will be contacted by the DLP and unless attendance improves, medical evidence will be requested for any further absence. Failure to produce medical evidence will result in unauthorised attendance.

### **Safeguarding:**

If we have concerns about the welfare of a child, the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher will visit the home address to try and ascertain what is happening.

We will contact Children's Services if a child already has a social worker assigned or contact CASS if we have reason/ cause for concern.

If neither of the above enable us to ascertain a child's whereabouts, we will contact the police via Billesley Neighbourhood team, Billesley Police Station.

### **Individualised pupil progress meetings**

During pupil progress meetings, attendance issues that are impacting on progress are discussed and recorded. These concerns are communicated to the attendance officer (DLP).

### **Registration**

It is important that all our pupils develop good attendance and punctuality so that they can make the most of the opportunities offered to them. Registration is completed using the electronic Progresso system and is the class teacher's responsibility. An 'N' is used for unreported absence and the office updates these following first day phone calls and messages received.

The class teacher has to mark the register twice a day, at the beginning of the morning, 8.55 am and afternoon, 12.45 for Infants and 1.15 for Juniors. This is a legal requirement and so must be done as accurately and clearly as possible. Registration is an important part of the day. Pupils should be actively involved by answering to their name in English or any other language as appropriate. It is important that there is a set routine and that pupils who are not present are commented on so that pupils know that when they are absent they are missed.

It is important that a record is kept of absence and the reason given so that any patterns emerging can be discussed with parents and attendance problems resolved as quickly as possible. It is important that any long term absence is noted in the pupil record as this might be helpful in explaining any gaps in learning at a future date.

If a class is on an educational visit, the register must be completed for both the morning and afternoon sessions. The afternoon session should not however be completed for those children that are not going on the trip (A list of all children on trips is left with the office by class teachers).

**Please note that registers must be completed accurately for safety reasons such as in the event of a fire and because they constitute a legal document and form part of a chain of evidence.**

Please refer any concerns about the accuracy of the register to the office for advice.

Our pupils are expected to be in the school grounds by 08.50 in the morning so they can start school at 8.55am. If a pupil is going to be late they should try to get to school as quickly as possible. It is better to be late than to miss school. KS1 pupils line up in the playground at 8.55am with the support of their parents/carers. Pupils should not be on the school premises before 8.45am.

### **What do we define as late?**

If a child arrives at school after 8.55 am (when the doors are closed and the register is being taken) the child is considered late and will be given an 'L' mark. The time registers are closed officially is at 9.05 am. If a child arrives after this time, they will be given a 'U' (late after register closes) mark.

If a child is absent from school parents/carers must contact the school office to explain why the child is absent and when they will return. When pupils return to school they should bring a note explaining why they were away.

### **Procedures for dealing with lateness**

1. School starts at 8.55am and children arriving after this time are classed as late and must report to the office, where names and reasons for lateness are recorded and the appropriate code added to the class electronic register on Progresso.
2. The office monitor lates daily and will inform school's DLP.
3. Children with regular lates will receive a 'lost minutes lost learning' letter. If lates do not improve or stop altogether, parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the DLP to discuss any issues. Parents failing to attend this meeting will be sent another appointment. A second appointment will be arranged should any of these pupils arrive at school late again.
4. The DLP monitors punctuality on a regular basis.
5. Persistent lateness will be dealt with by the DLP and the head teacher in liaison with the education welfare service.

Parents/carers should not keep their child off school to avoid being late. Continuous lateness is an offence, which may be prosecuted in court.

### **Medical Appointments**

Pupils who have medical appointments at the doctors, dentist, opticians etc should try to go outside school hours whenever possible. However, if they have to go in school time they will be allowed out of lessons only if they are collected by a named adult, who should bring along the appointment card.

### **Raising Attendance Concerns**

Any attendance concerns should be raised with the DLP.

### **The Attendance Officer/ Designated Lead Person**

The DLP will monitor pupils` attendance regularly and notify parents if attendance is a concern. Parents will be invited into school to discuss any concerns and further action or involvement from outside agencies will be actioned when necessary. Attendance is also monitored by pupil premium/ free school meals, gender, age, special needs and racial group.

If a child becomes a persistent absentee, i.e. 90% or below for attendance, or has 3 separate instances of absence due to illness within a half term, the Attendance Officer will implement our Attendance Action plan, a system of letters and meetings to improve the attendance. If the child's attendance does not improve we may then implement medical evidence and then follow the Fast-track to Attendance process (See Appendix 1). This may conclude in parents/carers being taken to court.

### **Working together**

It is important that our parent/carers support both their child and the school by making sure that all our pupils come to school on time every day. Parents/carers need to show that they think coming to school is important and they can do this by:

- Talking positively with their child about school
- Supporting with their child's homework
- Encouraging their child to be on time
- Having a place at home where information from the school is kept so that important events are known
- Getting plenty of sleep, exercise and a healthy breakfast

If for any reason parent/carers have any difficulty in getting their child to school on time every day, they should contact the school office who will arrange a meeting with school's attendance officer.

### **THE LEGAL POSITION**

The Local Authority, (LA), has to offer educational provision for all school age children through its schools and Educational Welfare Service, (EWS)

Schools must keep an attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions, noting any absence and indicating whether it is authorised or unauthorised.

The 1996 Education Act states that:

- Parents and guardians must make sure their children (aged 5-16 years) receive a suitable full time education by regularly attending school.
- School needs to report to the local authority if children fail to attend regularly or are absent for more than 10 school days,

In addition to this:

- Head teachers cannot grant any time off during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- Parents/carers should not book term time holidays prior to seeking approval from the school.
- If parents/carers take their children on holiday for 5 or more consecutive school days during term time and this is not authorised by the school, they can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 for each parent/carer per child (if paid in 21 days) or £120 per parent/carer (if paid between 21 and 28 days). If the fines remain unpaid the parent/carer may be taken to court.
- Parents/carers are legally required to request time off from the Head teacher at least 20 school days in advance of any arrangement being made.
- Parents/carers who regularly take their child out of school in term time may be prosecuted under the higher charge of an 'aggravated offence'. Aggravated offences are considered by the courts as being more serious offences and carry higher sentences/fines that are also recorded on the Police National Computer
- Fast-track to Attendance is an Early Help approach to legal intervention (See Appendix 1) which allows school to work with parents/carers in improving children's attendance and punctuality.

### **Leave of Absence**

#### **(previously known as family holiday or extended leave)**

Holidays should not be taken in term time. The Head Teacher is only allowed to authorise absences in accordance with the Extended Leave and Absence During Term Time policy, which complies with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

- All absences from school need to be requested in writing to the Headteacher
- All families wishing to travel abroad will need to meet with the Headteacher or her representative (DLP/ member of senior management)
- If the pupil is female and from a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) affected community then the Headteacher will use direct questioning to ascertain whether 'cutting' of the girl will be undertaken during the holiday. The Headteacher will then take the information from this meeting and make a decision on whether to refer to local CYPS or Police.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

Authorised absence may include:

- Illness
- Hospital/Medical appointments that cannot be made out of school hours
- Days of religious observance
- Authorised exceptional leave in term time
- Family circumstances e.g. extreme illness, death of parent

Unauthorised absence includes staying away from school because:

- They got up late
- To mind the house
- To look after siblings or due to an ill sibling
- To go shopping
- To celebrate a birthday

- Day trips
- Holidays/leave in term time

### **Reporting Absence**

- On the first day of absence, parents/carers must inform the school, by telephone stating the reason for the absence and when the child is expected to return to school. There is a 24 hour answerphone available. This should be done by 9.00am if possible.
- Absence from school for an appointment should be requested beforehand.
- The office should be shown proof of an appointment before an authorisation is given.

### **REWARDS AND INCENTIVES**

Our school ethos is based on encouraging self-esteem and praising wherever possible. Our incentive and rewards schemes reflect this.

In our celebrations assembly, a reward for attendance is given to the class with the best attendance during the previous week. The reward consists of the school mascots, class certificates and stickers.

This is recorded on a display in the hall. Classes are praised for improved performances.

At the end of each week

Any class with 100% attendance, for a week, receives a new game for their classroom.

At the end of each half term

The class with the best attendance receives a prize.

At the end of each full term pupils receive certificates for:

- ★ Gold – 100% attendance
- ★ Silver – 99%+ attendance

The names of children who have achieved 100% attendance and the class with the highest attendance each week are displayed on our celebrations board.

Pupils in KS1 line up in the playground at 08.55am with the support of their parents. They and their parents are encouraged to be in the playground for 08.50 for an 08.55 start.

### **Communication**

- Attendance figures are published in the weekly newsletter – each class percentage and the best class.
- Attendance is celebrated through our social media channels (e.g. Twitter) and our school app.
- School holiday dates are publicised in the newsletter and on our website.
- Attendance figures are recorded on each child's annual report to parents.
- Information letters and guidance are sent to parents/carers.
- Parents/carers whose child's attendance causes concern (at risk of dropping below or has fallen below 90%) are informed.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The systems and policy are reviewed at least annually

The attendance and punctuality data is analysed by DLP weekly

Findings, patterns and trends are presented on a regular basis (termly) to the link governor and Head teacher. Summary data is reported to governors in the Head Teacher's report to Full Governing Body.

Factors are recorded that may affect overall school attendance e.g. extended absences, religious observance/festivals, pupil mobility etc.

Pupil records are transferred and received in line with legal requirements.

### **The Rights of Every Child**

Woodthorpe JI School uses the U.N. Convention of the Rights of the Child to ensure that every policy supports the improvement of life chances for children.

Articles: 1, 2, 3, 13, 15,17, 19, 28, 29, 31.

This policy supports the work on Behaviour Management and complements our Anti- Bullying/Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding/ Child Protection Policy. Other related policies: Extended Leave and Absence During Term Time.

Signed:

Approved: 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2018

Review: April 2019

Public Protection Unit, West Midlands Police: 0845 113 500

Billesley Police Station: 101 Ext 7828 6531

## 'FAST-Track to Attendance' Quick Guide

Concerning levels of pupil absence either authorised or unauthorised

Step One – Early help including 'Signs of Safety and Wellbeing' (3 houses form) with the child

At least one session of unauthorised absence

Step Two – Invite parents to a School Attendance Review Meeting (SARM) and hold the SARM

Further unauthorised absence adding up to 10 sessions in total over the previous 12 calendar months whether the parent attended the SARM or not

Step Three – Send 'Formal Warning Notice' to each parent individually with an up to date attendance printout – this will be your evidence

MONITOR

At least 10 further sessions of unauthorised absence within 12 school weeks of the warning notice being issued

Step Four – Refer to ELIT

