



*Growing together, Learning forever*

# **WOODSTONE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Date for Review: September 2021

## **Introduction**

We expect all pupils on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the pupils to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all pupils. We will reward those pupils whose attendance is very good through termly attendance certificates. We will also make the best provision we can for those pupils who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Pupils who attend school on a regular basis can take advantage of the full array of educational opportunities available to them. Research shows that those pupils who have irregular attendance are at risk of not achieving their full potential and in extreme cases, may be drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the school has all current contact details and a home or mobile telephone number must be provided.

In September 2015 we were informed by the Local Authority that the Department for Education (DfE) had announced that any student whose attendance falls below 90% from September 2015 will be classed as a Persistently Absent student. Therefore, if a student misses 19 or more days over an academic year they will be classed as Persistently Absent.

The DfE say...

*If over 5 academic years a pupil has attendance of 90% the child will miss a half of a school year, that's a lot of lost education.*

*Pupils taking unauthorised leave of absence early in the year could be categorised as persistently absent well into half term five but have perfect attendance from their return date onwards.*

*As parents play an essential role in supporting attendance the changes to persistent absence need to be shared with them"*

### **School Responsibility - THE LAW and School Attendance**

- Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated each regulation applies to all schools in England.
- School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that will be collected every term through the School Census.
- The Headteacher and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance.

- Where school attendance problems occur, the school will endeavour to work with parents in the interests of the child to achieve a resolution.
- Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module.
- It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session.

## 2 Registration

Registration at Woodstone Community Primary School is as follows:

Morning registration – 9am

However, it is an expectation that pupils assemble on the playground in time for the bell which is rung at 8:55am

Afternoon registration – 1:15pm

Pupils who do not register within these times will be marked as 'late' – coded 'L'

## 3 Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either

**AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.

### Authorised Absence – coded as 'M', 'I', 'C', 'T', 'B', 'R'

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Parents do not authorise any absences and only the school can decide to authorise absences. An example where a school will not authorise an absence is when a parent takes a pupil out of school to go shopping during school hours.

The school will code an absence as authorised if the parents/carers provide medical evidence to justify their child's absence. School will expect parents to provide medical evidence for any absences over 3 days. Once referred to the Education Welfare Officer Naina Zavery you may be required to provide medical evidence for all absences even if it a single day.

The school may also make a referral to our Education Welfare Officer, if a pupil has an increasing number of authorised absences as this is classed as 'persistent absence'. Contact will be made with the parents regarding the absences.

The school may also make a referral to our Education Welfare Officer if there is a concern about a pupil's welfare or safety. Parents will be contacted to ascertain if further action needs to be taken.

Parents are expected to co-operate with the school and attend any meeting when requested to do so by the school.

### **Unauthorised Absence – coded as 'O' or 'G'**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given.

All absences are coded as unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason even with the support of a parent. Examples of this are

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Parents keeping pupils off school because they themselves are ill
- Family holidays or leave of absence that has not been agreed

An absence will also be coded as unauthorised if a parent fails to provide medical evidence when requested to do so.

## **4 Repeated unauthorised absences**

The school will contact the parent/carer of any pupil who has unauthorised absence. If a pupil has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/carers will be asked to a meeting at the school to discuss the problem

If the pupil continues to accrue unauthorised absences the school will make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer, Naina Zavery, who will make contact with the parents to arrange a meeting and seek to ensure that the parents/carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

Where required, legal action will be sought and the EWO will submit the case before the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice and /or prosecution. The Education Act 1996 (Section 444) states:

'If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence'. The school reserves the right to consider taking legal action against any parents/carers who repeatedly fail in their responsibility to send their children to school on a regular basis.

## **5 If a pupil is absent**

Parents and carers should inform the school on the morning of the first day of absence either by telephone on 01530 519473 or leave a message, clearly stating the reason for the absence and the expected duration of illness.

When a pupil is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, which will inform the school office. If the office has not already been informed of the reason for a pupil's absence, they will endeavour to contact a parent or carer by telephone or text message.

When the pupil returns to school, parents or carers must ensure that a note or verbal confirmation is provided to explain the reason for the absence.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a pupil has a medical appointment. Parents are encouraged to provide the appointment card/letter.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a pupil, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the pupil.

Where the school has concerns about a pupil's safety EWSM will be contacted and a 'Safe and Well' check will be carried out.

When a pupil is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the pupil.

## **6 Requests for leave of absence**

We believe that pupils need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child, e.g. a family crisis. We expect parents and carers to contact the school and request the leave of absence on the official school form. The Headteacher will respond to the request as soon as possible.

## **7 Holidays in term time**

New government guidelines, which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, prevent Head teachers from granting any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. A family holiday during term-time does not fall under the category of 'exceptional circumstances' and the school is therefore unable to grant leave of absence for any family holiday.

In order to request a family holiday for 'exceptional circumstances', Parents must complete a 'leave of absence' form, outlining the reason and the specific dates when leave is required. The Head will consider the request and inform the Parents of their decision in writing.

Holidays taken without permission will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' – family holiday not agreed ('G' Code). A referral may be made to the Education Welfare Officer to issue parents with a fine. Governors are sympathetic to the financial pressures on many families but feel that a pupil's education should be the priority at all times

## **8 Issuing a fine**

The parent(s) of any pupil who has absences recorded as a result of an unauthorized family holiday, could in some circumstances each be fined £60 which must be paid within a 21 day period. Failure to pay the fine(s) within this timescale, will result in the fines being doubled to £120, which will

need to be paid within 28 days of the original fine being issued. If the fine(s) remain unpaid after the full period of 28 days has expired, parents may face legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, Parents will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £1000.

Fines will be issued on a case by case basis with the Headteacher consulting with Naina from EWSM and the Governing Body

Parents can seek further clarification from EWSM on 07947994289 or email

[naina.zavery@ews-m.com](mailto:naina.zavery@ews-m.com)

## **9 Long-term absence**

When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. This work must be completed and returned to school so that the school can monitor the pupil's progress.

Where it is deemed that a pupil is unable to return to school due to chronic medical or other medical reasons the school will make a referral to Naina Zavery to ascertain if any alternative provision for education can be requested. Parents will have to provide medical evidence that clearly states a pupil is unable to return to mainstream education.

Parents must provide the school with medical evidence when their child is going to be off from school for long periods but alternative provision is not being sought. The school may refer this for further investigations to Naina Zavery who will make contact with the parent/s.

## **10 Lateness and punctuality**

Pupils are expected to arrive punctually, ready to line up on the playground at **8:55am**. The school gate is locked from 9am and any pupils arriving after this time must enter school through the main entrance and be 'signed in' by a parent/carer.

Registers close at **9:05am** and pupils arriving after this time will be marked as 'Late' on the class register

Any pupil that arrives at school after the register has closed will be coded as a 'U' code. This equates to an unauthorised mark. Parents may be requested to meet with the EWO if this becomes a regular problem. Legal action can be taken when a child has 'U' codes as this is deemed to be an unauthorised mark.

Where possible parents must ensure that they try and book all medical appointments either before school starts or after school finishes. It is useful for parents to provide the school with the appointment card and/or letter for any medical appointment. All medical appointments will be coded as an M which does equate to an authorised absence.

Parents/Carers of pupils who are persistently late will be contacted by the Headteacher and will be asked to address the problem. School may make a referral to Naina Zavery who will make contact with the parent/s.

### **11 Rewards for good attendance**

All the pupils who have excellent attendance in any term will receive a certificate. These are gold (100% attendance), silver (98- 99.9% attendance) and bronze (96-97.9% attendance). There are also special certificates for outstanding attendance (100%) for the whole school year. These are presented in our achievement assembly at the end of term.

The class with the highest weekly attendance will be awarded the 'Attendance Cup' in Friday's celebration assembly.

### **12 Attendance targets**

The school sets its own attendance targets each year. These are set by the governors at a termly full governors meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

### **13 Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The School will monitor attendance on a weekly basis to identify any pupils who are persistently absent or who continually arrive late. Parents will be informed by letter and will be expected to address this, otherwise the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be inspected by OFSTED who will make a judgement about the school's attendance in their inspection report.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance and punctuality in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a pupil's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular pupil, this will be reported to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher, who will contact the parents or carers.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

**Signed:**

**Date:**



## ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

### Attendance: key facts and figures

**Every school day counts towards your child's future. Days off school add up to lost learning.**

In total there are **175 non-school days a year**. This gives families the opportunity to:

- ✓ Spend time together
- ✓ Go on family visits
- ✓ Go on holiday
- ✓ Go shopping
- ✓ Go on days out
- ✓ Attend routine appointments

Days away from school add up to lost learning, some of which may never be repeated. The Government's target for attendance at school is that all pupils should achieve **at least** 96% attendance.

- 8 days absence = 96% attendance
- 19 days absence = 90% attendance
- 29 days absence = 85% attendance
- 38 days absence = 80% attendance
- 47 days absence = 75% attendance

## ATTENDANCE MATTERS!

Very Good		Worrying		Causing Serious Concern	
<b>The Effect of Absence on School Progress</b> A whole year has 365 days. A school year has only 190 days. This leaves: 175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments					
No absence	10 days absence	12 days absence	19 days absence	29 days absence	38 days absence
190 days of education	180 days of education	178 days of education	171 days of education	161 days of education	152 days of education
100%	95%	94%	90%	85%	80%
<b>Very Good</b> Best chance of success. Gets your child off to a flying start		<b>Worrying</b> Less chance of success. Makes it harder for your child to make progress		<b>Serious Concern</b> Your child will find it very difficult to make progress. May result in court action	

### Remember:

- ◆ **90% attendance is equal to 1 day off each fortnight**

### Poor punctuality:

Being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:

Arriving **5 minutes late** every day adds up to over **3 days lost each year**

Arriving **15 minutes late** every day is the same as being absent for **2 weeks a year**

Arriving **30 minutes late** every day is the same as being absent for **19 days a year**

**19 days lost a year through being late = 90% attendance.**

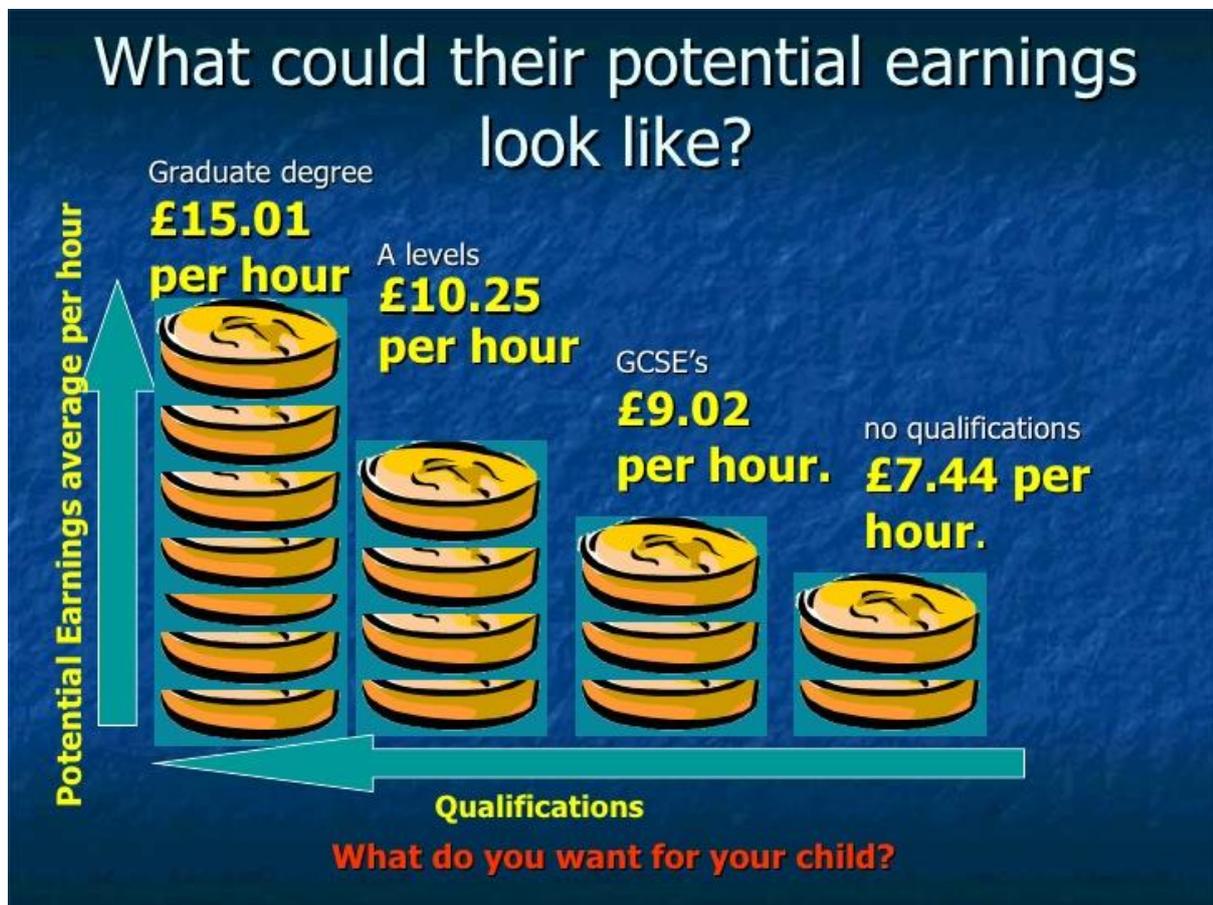
### IT'S A FACT....

Children with **over 90%** attendance at school are **more likely** to gain 5 or more A-C GCSEs or equivalent qualifications.

Children with **less than 85%** attendance at school are **unlikely** to gain 5 A-C GCSEs or any qualifications.

In general, the following applies:

## The more you learn the more you earn



- ✓ If your child attends school they are more likely to get on in life.
- ⊗ If your child regularly misses school, they are more likely to become involved in antisocial behaviour.

**Your child's education is your child's future. Don't waste it!**