



Attendance & Punctuality Guidance
2022-2023

Our Attendance and Punctuality Guidance is underpinned by research and evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) "Attendance Intervention in School" (March 2022)

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Review Dates **Annually**

Location of Policy **School website and central network**

Access to Policy **Open**

Policy Context **This guidance applies to all staff and children of the school**

| Revision Date | Description | Sections Affected | Revised By | Approved By |
|----------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|
| September 2022 | New | | | |
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As a school we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of 96% and above
- Increase parents' and childrens' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.
- Ensure all children are given the maximum potential to achieve by attending school regularly.
- Ensure that our guidance applies to all Reception KS1 and KS2 aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Keep all children safe and healthy by monitoring attendance rates.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers to improve attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more enjoyable and satisfying.
- Regular attenders settle into High School more easily.

Families should:

- Ensure your child attends school regularly. Absence should only happen when your child is significantly ill, there should be a symptom, feeling 'unwell' is not enough.
- Telephone or email on the first morning of any absence by 8.30 am informing us of the reason; 'ill/unwell' is not sufficient.
- Continue to contact the school daily when your child is absent.
- Make all non-emergency medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays.
- Provide evidence of these appointments and notify the school not less than 24 hours in advance.
- Provide medical evidence where the illness/absence is frequent or prolonged.
- Ensure we have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, childminders and emergency contact details.

Reporting an Absence:

It is not sufficient to inform the class teacher. All year groups including Nursery must follow these procedures. Please telephone the school office on **01832 733 221** and leave a message on the absence line and state the full reason for absence. You can also email the school office at **admin@woodford.northants.sch.uk**.

The school will:

- Follow up the unexplained absence by phone call, email, and letters as necessary.
- Telephone all listed contacts on a child's records if the number one contact is unobtainable.
- Remind parents / carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality via newsletters and the school website.
- Publish each child's attendance rate on her / his annual school report (Nursery – Y6).
- Inform parents if we have concerns regarding their child's attendance and punctuality.
- We will send ongoing communication home with regards to attendance. We will recognise high attendance as well as monitor low attendance.
- We will send 'Warning Attendance Letters' for those children whose attendance drops below 96%. If attendance does not improve we will send, 'Attendance Letters.'
- Inform parents if their children are classed as persistent absentees. Children with 90% attendance or less, whatever the reason for the absence, are classified as persistent absentees.

We shall make a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer if attendance drops below 90%. We may also discuss concerns with the LA Attendance Officer when attendance drops below 95%.

Persistent Absence:

Once a child's attendance falls to 90% for whatever reason, he/she is automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE) irrespective of the reason for absence as a Persistent Absentee. Persistent absence is a serious problem for children. Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up; these gaps in their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement, particularly at GCSE.

Such low attendance is well below our expectations and as such, the school will work in partnership with the family to improve matters. In such cases, parents might be invited to agree on a 'Parenting Agreement/Contract/Attendance improvement plan with the school as a way of managing improvement.

Authorised Absence:

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “authorised absences”. For example: if a child is ill, for family bereavement or for religious observance*.

*If you wish to apply for exceptional leave you will need to request a form from the school office which can be done in person or via email and provide evidence for the exceptional absence.

Unauthorised Absence:

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out/Going shopping
- Interpreting or supporting a parent at a meeting
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Term-time holiday
- Parent's illness (other than in an emergency)
- Where there is no explanation for absence or the school considers the reason given for the absence unsatisfactory.
- Absence following or prior a period of school closure or authorized leave unless satisfactory evidence to justify has been provided

Unauthorised Absences are reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem. The school will then work in partnership with you until matters improve.

SEN and Disadvantaged children:

Identified children with specific medical, therapy or Special Educational Needs, who have a high level of absence, will be supported by the following strategies:

- Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence
- Working with the Local Authority to record such absences as authorised to reflect attendance as good as can be expected for these children and the school
- Provide home visits where appropriate

Exceptional Leave – Term Time Leave of Absence:

Amendments to the School Attendance Regulations make it clear that a Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. if there is an emergency) at the discretion of the Headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.

If you wish to apply for exceptional leave you will need to request a form from the school office in person or via email and provide evidence for the exceptional absence

PLEASE NOTE THAT ABSENCE TAKEN WHICH HAS NOT BEEN AUTHORISED COULD BE LIABLE FOR A FIXED PENALTY FINE BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.

As a result of such monitoring requirements we have developed an attendance monitoring system. We will send communication about attendance a minimum of three times a year, however for some families this may be more depending on the attendance of your child / children at Woodford School.

Phase 1 – This is an individual reminder that your child's attendance is falling. We recognise that it may be because of illness but it lets you know the figure we have on our school system. It is usually sent out if periods of illness have resulted in attendance falling below 96%.

Phase 2 – This letter is a clear reminder that, regardless of reason, your child's attendance is now below 94% and causing concern. It is written formally and is part of the evidence trail to ensure that school has followed a process.

Phase 3 – This letter shows that your child's attendance has now fallen below 90% and absence is becoming/is persistent – there may be numerous reasons for this. It invites you to meet with me. This is an informal meeting so that we can go through your child's attendance record together. My experience of these meetings is that parents tell me about their child's illness or other reasons for their absence. Once I have had this face to face discussion, we talk about monitoring attendance in the immediate future and set attendance targets. This is individual for each case. Meeting together allows us to talk through the

reasons for absence and for the school to offer support if required. It is easier to do this than continue to write letters.

Phase 4 – This letter is sent after a scheduled meeting, laying out the attendance targets of 90%+ required over a set monitoring period. If attendance continues to fall over this monitoring period, is mainly unauthorised and goes below 90%, school will refer to the Local Authority which may lead to a penalty notice. In these final instances, actions are out of the school's influence.

Punctuality:

It is important to be on time as the first part of the school day is used to give out instructions or organise school work for the rest of the day.

School Times:

Start arrangements

- **Nursery** are invited into class from 8.40am
- **Reception, Year 1 and Year 2** are invited into class from 8.40 am
- **Year 3 and 4** are invited into class from 8.40 am
- **Year 5 and 6** are invited into class from 8.40 am

Children should not be left outside the gates before 8.40 am as no adult will be on duty before this time. You need to ensure your child is coming through the school gates by 8.50 am at the latest. The register will be taken promptly at 8.55 am and the school day will start on time. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class. You are considered late if you arrive to school after 9.00am.

Late Arrivals:

From 8.40am the gates will be staffed by a member of staff – any child who is late will need to enter school via the school office.

- Children that are not in class on time for the register will be marked late. (L code)
- All gates will be closed at 9.00 am.
- Late arrival after registration closes, without an acceptable reason will be marked as 'unauthorised absence'. (U code) Parents remain responsible for their child's punctuality. Arriving late to school on a consistent basis can have longer-term academic effects. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the child.
- All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness, if known will also be recorded. This information can be made available to the courts in the form of a report should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.
- Families of children who receive more than 5 late marks per half term will receive an email. Persistent lateness will be referred to the Local Authority.

Collection from School:

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day or from any after school activity. Where late collection is persistent and / or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected children to a place of safety. We will share concerns with other agencies. **If you are running late or unavoidably obtained, please keep the school office informed.**

Pick Up Arrangements:

Please inform the school office at the start of the school day if there are any changes to your regular pick up arrangements, this can be done verbally or written directly via email.

Please only contact the school office if your arrangements have been changed in an emergency, this minimises the disruption caused to the children's learning.