

# Woodcroft First School

**Head of School: Mrs H Hewitt**



**Woodcroft First  
School**

'Be wise, be wonderful'

## **Attendance Policy**

## Rationale

This policy is written in accordance with the recommendations made by Staffordshire County Council, Behaviour & Attendance Strategy; Attendance Policy & Guidance 2006.

Woodcroft First School is committed to creating a learning environment where all pupils can enjoy and achieve. Good, regular attendance and punctuality are vital for pupils to benefit from the opportunities for their progress and achievement provided by the school.

We expect our pupils to attend regularly, so that they benefit fully from all the opportunities we provide for their education, progress and achievement.

## Aims of the policy

The school will promote and encourage good attendance and punctuality through a variety of reward schemes initially in consultation with the EWO and will involve;

- Home School Agreement to contain a section specifically relating to attendance and punctuality
- Discussion at Open Night regarding attendance/punctuality and statistics regarding % attendance for the previous term passed to the parents. The attendance figure for the year will be in the child's end of year report.
- A pro-active approach by the school to instances of bullying; a lack of supportive friendships; other areas of concern for the child which deter good attendance.
- Reward system on a termly basis via certificates presented at the end of each term for 100% attendance.
- Certificate and book prize at end of each academic year for 100% attendance.

## Policy Implementation

Under section 444 of the **Education Act of 1996** parents, or those who have parental responsibility for children of compulsory school age, are required to ensure that their children receive an efficient full time education. Children are required to attend and to stay at school.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that 'If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence'. The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) the Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the LEA and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may produce a Parenting Order or in some circumstances take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education act of 1996. Following investigation, any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444. The EWS attend school regularly and monitor the registration and levels of attendance. Other duties may include;

- Telephoning and contacting parents
- Arranging meetings between School and Parents
- Visiting homes of Parents
- Liaising with Social service and other agencies

The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), and Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order. The penalty details are listed in the table below. **This responsibility also extends to ensuring that the children arrive at school on time, suitably dressed and in a fit condition to learn.**

<b>Penalties for Unauthorised Absence</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>One Child</b>	<b>Two Children</b>
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the ground you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the ground you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance.

It is also the parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reasons for their child's non-attendance as soon as possible, preferably on the **first day of absence.**

**Procedures for reporting absence;**

- By telephone – all parents have the school's phone number and are asked to leave a message on the answer machine if staff are unavailable
- By letter
- By email
- In person
- By showing an appointment card or letter
- By filling in a holiday request form (in advance)

**Authorised Absence**

The Head of School has the ultimate responsibility for authorising absences and will do so when a valid reason is given for the child's absence.

**Unauthorised Absence**

An unauthorised absence will be given when a child does not attend school and a valid reason is not given for the absence, or the Governors refuse to authorise a holiday request.

**Medical and Dental Appointments**

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays. If this is not possible then authorisation will be given where confirmation of the appointment is received via one of the methods already listed. Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents are expected to return their children to school following the appointment whenever possible.

**Procedure for taking a child out of school during the school day**

Parents/carers report to office and office staff arrange for children to come to the office. Exit from school during school hours is only through the main entrance. The absence is recorded in a book with the reason, time and whether the child is returning to school.

## **Special Occasions**

A request for a child to attend a special occasion during school time e.g. family wedding, must be made in advance and the Head of School will make the decision as to whether to authorise the absence. Parents will be notified of the Head's decision.

## **Days of Religious Observance**

Attendance at a religious observance held by a religious body will be granted as an authorised absence. The Head of School should be consulted in advance of the event.

## **Lateness**

**Parents are expected to ensure their child arrives punctually for the start of the school day at 8.55am.**

Registration is between 8.45am and 9.05am.

Children arriving after 9.05am must report with their parents to the school office, where they will be registered via the late book, they will receive a late mark in their class register – Late Mark = L. Children arriving after 9.30am without a reason from their parents will be given an unauthorised absence for the session. This is marked in the register with Unauthorised Late = U.

Families who regularly arrive late will be contacted by the Head of School. Education Welfare become involved if the problem cannot be quickly resolved.

**First Day Contact Procedure** – if school hasn't been contacted by a family member to advise of reason for child's absence by 10.00am then a member of school staff will endeavour to make contact.

## **Family Holidays**

The Governing body requests that parents make every effort not to arrange holidays during school terms.

Parents are advised that leave of absence for holidays during the school term will not be granted by the Head of School. Authorised absence will only be granted at the discretion of the Head of School. Fixed penalty warning letters can be issued if holidays are taken when unauthorised. A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can be issued by the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) for unauthorised holidays during term time.

## **School Procedures**

In managing the attendance and punctuality of its pupils the school will;

### **Keep appropriate attendance records**

- Registers are taken at the beginning of each am and pm session.
- Marks are regularly entered onto the computerised register on the office computer.
- Accurate information on attendance is available to designated employees and data gathered will be used to inform the Governing body of attendance and punctuality trends
- This information will enable Governors and senior staff to effectively target attendance and punctuality as necessary.

### **Monitor patterns of attendance**

The Head of School in liaison with administration staff and the Education Welfare Officer, will regularly review registers in order to work with families whose patterns of attendance or punctuality are unsatisfactory. All parents will be informed, via the annual report, of their child's overall attendance and their attendance compared to the average for the school.

### **Involve the Education Welfare Officer**

- The Head of School through regular meetings with EWO will discuss issues surrounding attendance and punctuality.

- If there is cause for concern the following procedures will be followed; The Head of School will speak to the parents of the child. (See Process Flowchart in Appendix 2)
- A letter will be sent home raising the concerns by either the school or the Education Welfare Service as is most appropriate.
- Parents are invited into school to talk to the Head of School and the EWO informally
- If informal intervention is unsuccessful then an official referral to the EWO will be made by the school.
- The EWO may visit the home.

Throughout these procedures the Head of School and the EWO will regularly discuss ongoing cases.

### **Penalty Notices**

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued;

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.

### **Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:**

- There is unauthorised persistent absence. "Persistent" means at least 20 sessions of unauthorised absence over a period of twelve school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- There is a period of absence not authorised by the head teacher or in excess of the period authorised by the head teacher.(e.g. family holiday)
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

### **Other conditions.**

- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child
- Use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised persistent absence / lateness will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent of a pupil per academic year.

### **Who is responsible for this policy?**

The Head of School is the member of staff responsible for ensuring that the Attendance Policy is used consistently and effectively.

It is the role of this person to:

- Monitor the implementation of the policy

- Support staff to maintain attendance levels
- Make recommendations for further improvement
- Support parents and carers

Office staff are responsible for the implementation of the policy on a day-to-day basis. All staff are required to be aware of each pupils attendance.

### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the person responsible for Assessment. Any updates and/or amendments to the policy will ratified by the Senior Leadership team and the appropriate sub-committee of the Governing Body.

### Associated documents

**Appendix 1 - Leave of Absence Request Form**

**Appendix 2 – Attendance Process Flowchart**

# Appendix 1

## Leave of Absence Request Form

This form should be completed and submitted to the Headteacher at least four weeks before the start of the proposed leave of absence. Separate forms should be completed for each child if more than one.

Parents and carers are reminded that Leave of Absence taken without permission may result in the issuing of fixed penalty fines by the Local Authority, please refer to the recent letter outlining penalty notices.

Parents are also reminded that Leave of Absence for the purpose of holidays in term time can no longer be granted save in the most exceptional circumstances.

<b>Name of child:</b>	
<b>Form/Tutor Group:</b>	
<b>Are there siblings in a local school(s)?</b>	YES / NO
<b>Please state school(s) sibling(s) attend:</b>	
<b>Name of sibling(s):</b>	
<b>Name of parent/carer making request:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Telephone number(s):</b>	
<b>Start date of proposed leave of absence:</b>	
<b>End date of proposed leave of absence:</b>	

**If applicable please provide evidence from your employer.**

**(For example, work rota, holiday entitlements, company shutdowns etc)**

**Reasons for request:**

Signed Parent / Carer

Dated

**Please return this completed form to the school office**

**Office Use Only**

Decision	
Current Attendance %	

Parent informed of decision	
Recorded on Register	

## Appendix 2

### Attendance Monitoring Flowchart

