



## **Attendance Policy**

### **Introduction**

At Woodhill Primary School we aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to strive for excellence. For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

### **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### **Attendance and Punctuality in the Early Years:**

Establishing good habits from the start will help your child to settle more quickly and build good habits for later life. Coming to school on time, every day helps to develop confidence.

Research has shown that, even at the earliest age, children with poor attendance and punctuality are at a disadvantage later in life. They generally find it harder to make and maintain friendships, they achieve less and they often suffer from poor self-esteem. Even if your child only has a part time Nursery place, regular attendance is vitally important.

The school keeps a register of attendance for every child. This is a legal document and record and classifies every half-day attendance and/or absence. Absences are classified as either authorised or unauthorised. For this reason, the school will ask parents/carers for the reason for each absence.

### Every School Day Counts

Although being absent cannot always be helped as we all do become ill from time to time, please take a look at the table below to show you exactly how much time your child could be missing.

| <b>365 Days in a Year</b> | <b>190 School Days in Total</b> | <b>Absence</b>        |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 100% Attendance           | 190 Days                        | 0                     |
| 95% Attendance            | 180 Days                        | 2 Weeks               |
| 90% Attendance            | 171 Days                        | 4 Weeks               |
| 85% Attendance            | 161 Days                        | 6 Weeks               |
| 80% Attendance            | 152 Days                        | More than half a term |
| 75% Attendance            | 143 Days                        | 9+ Weeks              |

### Promoting Regular attendance

Effective partnership between the school and home is essential to ensuring good attendance and punctuality. It is vital that any difficulties are discussed with the Headteacher so that these can be resolved through working together.

#### To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- We hold an induction interview/meeting before the child enters school if their previous school has reported poor attendance
- All new parents will be given a letter outlining that the school expectations with regard to attendance
- At the end of each term those pupils who have achieved 100% attendance will receive a certificate
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality
- Targets for the school for attendance and punctuality are displayed around the school, on newsletters and on the school website
- The class teacher, on the end of year record, will add comments on attendance and punctuality. They will also report on attendance and punctuality at Parents' Evenings
- The Headteacher with responsibility for attendance will work closely with parents, the school attendance officer for the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the child to improve poor performance, in line with borough and national policies

#### Safeguarding:

Effective attendance procedures are integral to ensuring all children are kept safe. Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interest of each child is everyone's responsibility and failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

## **The Law Relating to Attendance:**

### **Legislation**

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal and parental responsibility. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued (Section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003) or Court action/prosecution (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996)

*Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable: -*

- a. To age, ability and aptitude*
- b. To any special educational needs, they may have either by regular attendance to school or otherwise.*

If you wish to find out more information about the legislation around attendance, please visit:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/564599/school\\_attendance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564599/school_attendance.pdf)

### **Understanding Types of Absence:**

Every-half day absence from school has to be classified by the Headteacher (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which cannot be made outside of school time or unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

In order to enable the school to authorise an absence due to illness, parents/carers are requested to;

- **Provide medical evidence to the school. This can be in the form of GP/Hospital/Medical/Dental Appointment letters/cards, Copies of prescriptions/antibiotics issued (providing the child's name is indicated there on).**

In order to enable the school to authorise an absence due to an emergency or unavoidable cause, parents/carers are requested to;

- **Speak to the Attendance Officer/Head Teacher, advise them of the issue and request the absence be authorised.**

- **Write to the Attendance Officer/Head Teacher and request the absence be authorised.**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "authorised leave of absence" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the use of sanctions and/or referring to the Local Authority for legal intervention.

#### **Unauthorised absences are;**

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Parents/carers not communicating the reason for absence to the school
- Absences which have never been properly explained or evidenced
- Parents not providing medical evidence to the school to support the absence as being due to ill health
- Child who arrive at school after the Registration period has ended
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips, holidays or overseas trips in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

#### **Absence in Term Time:**

As of 1st September 2013 there has been a change to The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations Act 2006. Headteacher's may no longer grant a 'Leave of Absence' in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore, any such absences not deemed as exceptional circumstances will be unauthorised. Holidays or overseas trip absences in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking students away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday/overseas trip in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. Because of the damage to your child's learning caused by this, **we do not authorise any holidays/overseas trips in term time.**

#### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling from the beginning of the school year **for whatever reason** (this includes authorised and unauthorised absences). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any

child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards it, is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

Projected PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our attendance system. All our PA children and their parents are subject to an Intervention Plan. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Attendance Advisory Officer and some cases may lead to a referral to the Attendance Advisory Service of the Local Authority, whereby legal action could be initiated.

### **Lateness**

Please make sure your child is on the playground ready for the beginning of the school day at 8:50am. After this time, your child will be deemed as late. In order for us to promote good punctuality, lateness will be monitored and should the school believe that punctuality is becoming an issue, we will send you a letter as a reminder of this.

Following guidance from our Attendance Advisory Officer, we have been instructed that any child who arrives at school after 9:20am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

It is also important that all children are collected on time at the end of the school day. School finishes at 11.50 or 3.30pm for the nursery and 3.15pm for the main school. If you are regularly late in collecting your child, you will be expected to attend a meeting to discuss the reason why you are late. If you are late more than twice in one week you may be issued with a fine.

Persistent failure to arrange for their child to be collected at a reasonable time may result in the child being taken to a place of safekeeping by the police or into temporary care by social services.

### **Every Minute Counts**

As well as being absent a lot from school effecting your child's development, being late also has a big effect on their learning time, please look at the table below:

| <b>Lateness = Lost Learning</b><br>(figures below are calculated over the school year) |               |
|--|---------------|
| 5 mins late each day   | 3 days lost   |
| 10 mins late each day  | 6.5 days lost |
| 15 mins late each day  | 10 days lost  |
| 20 mins late each day  | 13 days lost  |
| 30 mins late each day  | 19 days lost  |

### **Absence Procedure:**

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, advising of the reason and likely length of absence, either by calling the school office on [02088545055](tel:02088545055) or emailing [info@woodhill.greenwich.sch.uk](mailto:info@woodhill.greenwich.sch.uk). (A phone call will be made to parents each time the child has been marked with an unauthorised absence code and no reason has been given for the absence).
- Contact the school on the subsequent days of absence as necessary.
- Provide evidence where possible, supporting the reason for absence.

### **What School will do if Attendance is a Concern:**

- Letters will be sent to parents to alert them to the concerns school has about their child's attendance and/or punctuality.
- Invite you into the school to discuss the situation with the Attendance Officer / Headteacher.
- Undertake interventions and offer support where possible/appropriate, through school resources and/or outside agencies.
- Use Royal Borough of Greenwich's Guidance to Improve Attendance.
- Undertake Home visits, as necessary.
- Hold Pre-referral meetings to address irregular school attendance, in the presence of the Officer from the Attendance Advisory Service of the Local Authority.
- Undertake a referral to the Attendance Advisory Service if your child's **unauthorised** absence reaches 10% or more.

### **The Attendance Advisory Officer:**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school staff in resolving any problems related to attendance together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved this way, and unauthorised absences continue, the school may refer to the Attendance Advisory Service. The Attendance Advisory Officer will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve your child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Attendance Advisory Service can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or Prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Parents may wish to contact the Attendance Advisory Service themselves to ask seek advise or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 020 8921 8510.

### **Child Missing Education (CME)**

Any child who ceases to attend a school, without notification as to their new address and/or the school they are transferring to, becomes a '**Child Missing in Education**'. Any child in this category is reported to the Child Missing in Education Officer at the Local Authority, who will follow up the matter under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 and Safeguarding legislation, as necessary. This can involve the police.

The attendance procedures are crucial to ensuring the safety of all children. If a child has been absent from school for 20 consecutive days without good reason and their whereabouts are unknown, the school has a legal obligation to report the child as missing education to the relevant local authority. In accordance with DFE regulations the child may be removed from the school roll.

### **Communication – What we Need to Know:**

#### **Telephone Numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we have always got up to date phone numbers for yourself and emergency contacts, for if you are unavailable.

#### **Home Address:**

Let us know when you move and where you are moving to.

#### **Removing a Pupil from Our School:**

If you make the decision to transfer your child to another school, for whatever reason and have given the relevant notice period to the school, as a matter of priority you need to provide the school with all of the necessary details.

#### **Elective Home Education:**

If you make the decision to educate your child at home, you are required to advise us of this in writing.

Once the letter/email is received, we will remove your child from the school roll and advise the Elective Home Education Officer of the Local Authority, who will make contact with you regarding this matter.

If a letter/email is not received, your child remains on the roll of the school and their absence is treated as unauthorized. \*Action to address the unauthorised absence, will be followed as detailed above.

#### **The people responsible for attendance matters in the school are:**

*Head Teacher-Mrs Vdovin*

*Deputy Headteacher- Ms McKenna and Mr Phillips*

*Home School Liason Officer-Julie Sillince*

*RBG Attendance Advisory Officer- Jillian O'Beirne*

**Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to ensure procedures are in place to support good attendance and punctuality. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

**GUIDANCE FOR COMPLETING ATTENDANCE REGISTERS**

- Registers must be completed in ink - use black for present and red for absence.
- Children's names should be in alphabetical order.
- Do not use Tippex, etc. If a mistake is made, cross out and clearly show the correction (legal document). Children joining the class should be added at the end of the list.

**Registration Period**

- 8.50 - 9.00 All registers should be filled in at this time. Mark child present, or, if absent, use the appropriate code as indicated in the register.
- 9.00 - 9.20 If a child comes in late during this period, mark with L (the time must be noted).
- Registers are brought up to the school office in the morning and afternoon. If a child comes in later than 9.20, the register will be marked with U and the time noted.
- Any known reasons for absence should be noted at the time in the enquiry column. Please continue to make sure you get the reasons for absence. Unexplained absences will be followed up with a slip to the parent. Notes from parents should be dated and put in the back of the register.
- If a child returns from an absence with no explanation received (or an inadequate explanation), a proforma letter will be sent out.

|                                   |                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Policy to be reviewed again on:   | September 2023           |
| Committee responsible for review: | Learning and Achievement |