
 <p><b>Woodford County</b> High School for Girls</p> <p><b>SCHOOL POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Policy</b></p>	Effective Date : 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
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	Approved by:  Curriculum and Personal Development Committee	Page <b>1</b> of <b>12</b>

# WOODFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Table of Contents

1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation and guidance.....	2
3. Roles and responsibilities.....	3
4. Recording attendance.....	5
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence.....	8
6. Strategies for promoting attendance .....	9
7. Attendance monitoring.....	9
8. Monitoring arrangements .....	12
9. Links with other policies .....	12

 <p><b>Woodford County</b> High School for Girls</p> <p><b>SCHOOL POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Policy</b></p>	Effective Date : 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Last modified : 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Document no : SP 05/012	
	Replaces version: SP 05/011 – July 2024	
	Approved by:  Curriculum and Personal Development Committee	Page 2 of 12

## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through a whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Actively promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(February 2024\)](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)


Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 and 2024 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

 <p><b>Woodford County</b> High School for Girls</p> <p><b>SCHOOL POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Policy</b></p>	Effective Date : 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Last modified : 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Document no : SP 05/012	
	Replaces version: SP 05/011 – July 2024	
	Approved by:  Curriculum and Personal Development Committee	Page 3 of 12

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

#### 3.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

#### 3.2 The Headteacher


The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary via application to the local authority.

#### 3.3 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance (Senior Attendance Champion): Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) - Mrs Mellisa Greenfield

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Pastoral and Safeguarding Teams
- Advising the Headteacher on the issue of fixed-term penalties and monitoring this process.
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of the analysis of attendance data analysis

 <p><b>Woodford County</b> High School for Girls</p> <p><b>SCHOOL POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Policy</b></p>	Effective Date : 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Last modified : 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Document no : SP 05/012	
	Replaces version: SP 05/011 – July 2024	
	Approved by:  Curriculum and Personal Development Committee	Page 4 of 12

- Working alongside the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

### 3.4 Teaching staff

Teaching staff (form tutors) are responsible for recording session attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes [/] or [N] for AM registration. PM session registration is linked with the P5 class registration. Class teachers should register their classes within the first 10 minutes of the lesson by using the correct codes [/], [N] or [L]. Where students are late, the lateness and reason should be recorded on to the schools MIS. Any [N] codes will be cleansed by the Attendance Officer and School Administrators within 5 school days.

### 3.5 Attendance Officer and KS5 Pastoral Assistant


The Attendance officer and KS5 Pastoral Assistant will:

- Record [L] codes where students have arrived to school after 08:30 at the gate. The schools fobbing system tracks the daily punctuality of students who arrive past 08:30.
- Take calls from parents (and students in the sixth-form) about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Call home to check where absence has not been notified.
- Communicate information from parents (and pupils) to the Pastoral Teams in order to provide them with more detailed information to support attendance.

### 3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 08:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with additional proof to authenticate reasons for absence (See section 4.2).
- Provide the school with medical authorisation where absences are greater than **five school days or where patterns of absence emerge** (See section 4.2).
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

 <p><b>Woodford County</b> High School for Girls</p> <p><b>SCHOOL POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Policy</b></p>	Effective Date : 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Last modified : 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Document no : SP 05/012	
	Replaces version: SP 05/011 – July 2024	
	Approved by:  Curriculum and Personal Development Committee	Page 5 of 12

- Ensure that any unavoidable absence from school is minimised.

### 3.7 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time (School starts at 08:30): **arrive by 08:20 and be ready for the start of school at 08:30.**
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- Sixth form students call the school to report their absence before 09:00 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence.

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day (AM registration) and once during the second session (Period 5). It will mark whether every pupil is:


- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry;
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

 <p><b>Woodford County</b> High School for Girls</p> <p><b>SCHOOL POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Policy</b></p>	Effective Date : 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Last modified : 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Document no : SP 05/012	
	Replaces version: SP 05/011 – July 2024	
	Approved by:	
	Curriculum and Personal Development Committee	Page 6 of 12

- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:20 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:30 and will be kept open until 09:00. The register for the second session will be taken at 14:20 for KS3 students and 14:30 for KS4 and KS5 students and will be kept open until 14:45.

#### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the/ absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school via the Attendance Officer (or KS5 student themselves via the KS5 Pastoral Support Assistant) (see also section 7). Parents **must** continue to contact the school on each and every day of absence.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Unplanned absences of **five** school days and less days will be authorised upon receipt of a letter or an email from the parent (written authentication) unless the illness takes place within **five** school days prior or after a school holiday. In the case of illnesses within **five** school days prior or after a school holiday, medical authentication is needed such as a doctor's letter, prescription, appointment card or a discharge note from a hospital. *This is not an exhaustive list.*


For absences greater than **five** school days (or where patterns of absence emerge), medical authentication is needed such as a doctor's letter, prescription, appointment card or a discharge note from a hospital.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

#### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment (that cannot take place outside of school hours) will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment **and** where evidence of the appointment is provided.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

 <p><b>Woodford County</b> High School for Girls</p> <p><b>SCHOOL POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Policy</b></p>	Effective Date : 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Last modified : 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Document no : SP 05/012	
	Replaces version: SP 05/011 – July 2024	
	Approved by:  Curriculum and Personal Development Committee	Page 7 of 12

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late (reaches the school gate after 08:30):

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code, [L]

After the register has closed (from 09:00) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code, [U]. Persistent lateness of this nature may result in a penalty notice being issued.


Students are identified as being late if they reach the school gate after 08:30. Students who arrive late are given a 15-minute late detention on the day of the offence. Failure to attend a late detention will result in behaviour sanctions.

If lateness is persistent, a member of the Pastoral Team will determine if there is a genuine reason for lateness. This is achieved by meeting with the child and where necessary with the parent/carer. The school aims to eliminate the reason for lateness and rather than sanction needlessly. Persistent lateness after the close of registration may generate a penalty notice being issued (**Redbridge attendance policy**).

#### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact social services in the event that the child is known to be vulnerable and will refer to the Educational Welfare Service (EWO). The EWO may conduct a home visit to ascertain the reason of absence.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – **this will be no later than 5 working days after the session**
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer for a home visit and report the child missing education to the local authority.

 <p><b>Woodford County</b> High School for Girls</p> <p><b>SCHOOL POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Policy</b></p>	Effective Date : 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Last modified : 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Document no : SP 05/012	
	Replaces version: SP 05/011 – July 2024	
	Approved by:  Curriculum and Personal Development Committee	Page 8 of 12

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via the child's termly report. Where a child's absence is of concern (less than 95% from week 5 of half-term 1 and onwards) a letter will be sent home to identify this concern. Further correspondence and calls home will be made to parents where the child's attendance fails to improve (*As stated in Section 7.4*). The Designated Attendance Champion will also communicate to the whole school via the school bulletin for matters concerning whole school attendance and punctuality.

### 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

#### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' to be an **emergency situation** such as a bereavement.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. The DfE state that leave of absence cannot be granted retrospectively. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.


Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes (*mobile pupils only*) – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school.

Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' include where the [headteacher/head of school] may grant term-time holiday include

- Compassionate leave
- Events that result in the LBR providing a child license for performances



 <p><b>Woodford County</b> High School for Girls</p> <p><b>SCHOOL POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Policy</b></p>	Effective Date : 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Last modified : 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Document no : SP 05/012	
	Replaces version: SP 05/011 – July 2024	
	Approved by:  Curriculum and Personal Development Committee	Page 9 of 12

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents (PCN, Penalty Charge Notice) for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age (at WCHS, this is until the last Friday in June for a child turning 16 by the end of the summer holidays). On the issuing of the first PCN, **each parent** must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If a second PCN is issued, **each parent** must pay £160 within 28 days, there is no reduction in the fee payable. No more than two PCNs can be issued over a period of three years. If there are further unauthorised attendance concerns, legal proceedings may ensue.

Penalty notices can be requested by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police but issuing of the penalty is carried out by the local authority. ***The payment of the penalty notice is to the local authority.***

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.


## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Our school promotes good attendance by explaining the benefits of a sustained presence in school. The use of assembly and form time enables better understanding of why school attendance is vital. Examples are also given to showcase the negative effects of poor attendance.

Exemplary attendance is celebrated in school by the rewarding of certificates to students in assembly who have excellent attendance or those who have made significant improvement in their attendance.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

Our school uses the data management system SIMS to record session and lesson attendance and punctuality. Data is subsequently analysed on a fortnightly basis by the Assistant Headteacher with

 <p><b>Woodford County</b> High School for Girls</p> <p><b>SCHOOL POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Policy</b></p>	Effective Date : 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Last modified : 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Document no : SP 05/012	
	Replaces version: SP 05/011 – July 2024	
	Approved by:	
	Curriculum and Personal Development Committee	Page <b>10</b> of <b>12</b>

oversight of attendance and punctuality with the school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). Groups of particular concern are monitored with more scrutiny, these include:

- Vulnerable students
- Looked after children
- Children who are known to have a poor attendance from prior years.

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance


The School will:

- Review attendance and absence data fortnightly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected regularly and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.
- Provide the LA with details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have continuous absence for **10 days** if codes G, O or U.
- Provide the LA with details of pupils where it believed that the pupil will miss **15 consecutive days** due to medical reasons.
- Share attendance data with the DfE
- Make reasonable enquiries (e.g. Home visits, calling through contacts list) about any child's prolonged unknown absence (**after day 5**) and record a Child Missing Education (CME) form to the LA where the need necessitates.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

 <p><b>Woodford County</b> High School for Girls</p> <p><b>SCHOOL POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Policy</b></p>	Effective Date : 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Last modified : 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Document no : SP 05/012	
	Replaces version: SP 05/011 – July 2024	
	Approved by:	
	Curriculum and Personal Development Committee	Page <b>11</b> of <b>12</b>

### 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The School will:


- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, HoY and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Send letters of concern home of children who are at risk (attendance <95%) of becoming persistently absent (from week 5 of half-term 1 and onwards).
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school. The school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) may or may not be attendance in these meetings. Attendance contracts will be a requirement in accordance with DfE guidelines.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Where P/T timetables are offered to support return to school, agreement of both school and parents is required with wider support and regular reviews and end date documented and any social workers kept up to date. If the child has an EHCP, agreement with the schools SENCO should also be sought.
- If support offered does not reduce absence, a more formal route will be sought including the use of attendance contracts informing parents of the requirement for their child to improve their attendance "**notice to improve**", the school support being offered, the time period of monitoring (legally between 2 and 13 weeks *but* typically between 2 and 4 weeks) and the sanctions that may be imposed for non-compliance. The period of review may result in a subsequent review meeting to seek better understanding of non-compliance.
- Work with the local authority to issue PCNs and court warnings where absence is ongoing in accordance with local and national code of conduct and payable to the local authority.

 <p><b>Woodford County</b> High School for Girls</p> <p><b>SCHOOL POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Policy</b></p>	Effective Date : 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Last modified : 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	
	Document no : SP 05/012	
	Replaces version: SP 05/011 – July 2024	
	Approved by:  Curriculum and Personal Development Committee	Page <b>12</b> of <b>12</b>

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum two years by the Assistant Headteacher responsible for attendance and punctuality. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour policy