
 <p><b>Woodford County</b> High School for Girls</p> <p><b>SCHOOL POLICY</b></p> <p><b>Attendance Policy</b></p>	Effective Date : 23rd May 2023	
	Last modified : 17th November 2022	
	Document no : SP 05.010	
	Replaces Version : SP 05.009	
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# WOODFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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## 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](#) (May 2022) 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

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### 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

#### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance: Dr. Cassim Ashraff ([AshraffC@woodford.redbridge.sch.uk](mailto:AshraffC@woodford.redbridge.sch.uk))

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 Designated Safeguarding Officer and the relevant senior leaders.
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-term penalties and overseeing 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 data analysis

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- 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.

### 3.5 School Key Stage Administrators


Key Stage Administrators staff 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.
- Transfer calls from parents (and pupils) to the pastoral lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on 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 09:00 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with written authentication of 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.
- Request approval for absences at least two weeks in advance (See section 5.1).

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### 3.7 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time: **to arrive by 08:20 and 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.
- Submit absence letters to the KS administrators (See section 4.2, 4.3)

## 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

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- 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 09:00 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school via the Key Stage administrators (see also section 7).

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). Where the absence is greater than **five** school days medical authentication is needed such as a doctors 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 will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer (via e-mail or telephone call to the key stage administrator) notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

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.

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.

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#### 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 will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code, [U]

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 leads to a 30 minute detention which is followed by a 1 hour detention if the problem persists.

If lateness is persistent, a member of the pastoral team (Form tutor, HoY or AHT in charge of attendance and punctuality) will determine if there is a genuine reason for lateness. This is achieved by meeting with the child and where necessary with the parent/carers. 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/carers 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.
- 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/carers 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.

#### 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 90% from half-term 2 and onwards) a letter will be sent home to identify this concern.

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## 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 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 – 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

### 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents 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). If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, **each parent** must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.



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Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

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 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.

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### 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 each term 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.

### 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

### 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 either persistently or severely absent (from term the second half-term 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

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engagement at school. The school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) may or may not be attendance in these meetings.

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Work with the local authority to issue fine and court warnings where absence in ongoing.

## 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:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

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#### Appendix 1 : attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

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Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

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Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day