



Attendance Policy for Academies

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Change History	
Date	Description
November 2023	Current Version
May 2024	Update to statutory guidance – effective 19 August. - Requirement to keep registers electronically - Requirement to share daily attendance with DfE - Extended requirement to retain information for 6 yrs - New absence codes Updated information about penalty notices in line with new national framework

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1. Aims

The University of Chichester Academy Trust is committed to inspiring all young people with an excellent education that raises their aspirations and enriches their lives. To do this we must all work together to strive towards every child attending as much of their education as possible so they can meet their true potential. This endeavour will be a partnership between the Trust, our Academies, Local Authorities, parents, carers and pupils.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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](#)
- It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees and its Local Governing Bodies

The Board of Trustees and its Local Governing Bodies are responsible for

Promoting the importance of school attendance across the Trust's and its academies' policies and ethos

Making sure leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

Monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy

Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

Facilitating the sharing of good practice across academies

Holding leaders to account for the implementation of this policy through the Standards and Curriculum Committee of the Board and its Local Governing Bodies.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy
- Monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to the Trust and governors

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Apply for fixed-penalty notices to be issued, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the academy
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers and the relevant Local Authority
- Work actively with local partners to deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Abigail Oliver and can be contacted via 01420 476342.

3.4 Staff responsible for attendance in Trust academies

The Trust has a number of different role-profiles covering responsibility for attendance. Leaders will ensure that the following responsibilities are allocated to the relevant staff and reflected in their job descriptions:

- Take calls/messages from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the relevant system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to Vicki Trinder (Attendance Champion) in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with external partners to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information using the agreed procedure by 8.45am.

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day as expected, on time

- Call the academy or use any online systems to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day and that where this is not possible, their child attends before and after the appointment
- Inform leaders of any factors that may be affecting their child's attendance
- Discuss any planned absences in advance of making any arrangements
- Supply medical or other evidence when requested to account for their child's absence
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance (see 5.1)
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Take an active role in working with the academy staff to improve attendance where concerns are raised
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered by partners, including any attendance contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Admission and Attendance registers

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

The admission register must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the academy along with their starting date, information regarding parents and details of the school last attended. A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register in accordance with regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Data must be retained for six years from the data of entry.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. This information will be shared as required with the DfE and other agencies. 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:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.30am.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 8.45am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- **Unauthorised Absence** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. Unauthorised absence can be defined as "Absence from school for any period as a result of a premeditated or spontaneous act by the pupil or parent or both. This includes parentally condoned absence."

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that **Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. All absences associated with a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Woodlea Primary School, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Woodlea Primary School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave (see Appendix 2). If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised. Woodlea Primary School will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age (age 5) at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should:

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

The 1996 Education Act also sets out the circumstances in which a pupil has not failed to attend school regularly and therefore the parent has not committed an offence.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school 01420 476342 (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the academy 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.

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must inform the school office and complete the school form. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Where a child has an emerging a pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent. We will invite parents to attend a support meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the School Nursing Team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) and Hampshire policies regarding supporting children with health issues, [Behaviour and attendance resources for schools | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#). We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carers notifies the academy in advance of the appointment by filling in our leave form, or by emailing the office.

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 academy can authorise.

Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Woodlea Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) page 86

Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

School gates open at 8.30am, with registration closing at 8.45am. Afternoon registration is taken as soon as the children re-enter the building after lunch play, at 1pm, with registration closing at 1.10pm.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call by 9.30am on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated:

First Day Absence:

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If a child is absent, we will:

- Telephone you **by 9.30am** on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. This is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If school cannot contact a parent, a home visit may be carried out.
- All contact regarding attendance and reasons for absence will be recorded on Arbor to provide a comprehensive chronology if required.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.
- School will phone home if a pupil leaves the school without permission.

Third Day Absence:

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence, the school is required to start child missing in education procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends and wider family.

Tenth Day Absence:

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer, then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents can help us by making sure we always have an up to date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or Ongoing Absence:

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90%, we may contact you and depending on the reasons for the absence will invite you to make contact with the school.

If a child has missed 10% or more schooling across one term or more for whatever reason they are defined as persistent absentees. The school will:

- Arrange a meeting between the parent/carer and the Headteacher to discuss how best to support the parent/carer and their child to improve their attendance if they are approaching 10%.
- Look at the child's attendance pattern and if concerned will not authorise any further absence
- Refer to Inclusion Support Service for support, guidance, and advice.
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through and [Behaviour and attendance resources for schools | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/behaviour-and-attendance-resources-for-schools)
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or consulting with the Children's Social Care or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns

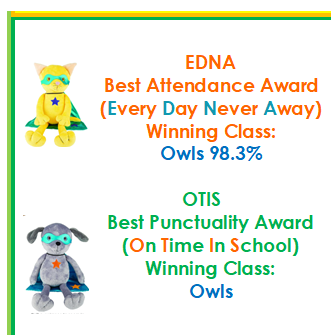
Attendance Rewards & Interventions

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child. It needs to be remembered that children in education are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that

children enjoy coming into school. Whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, they must not carry the blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas. The Home/School agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our weekly newsletter
- Report to parents/carers on how his or her child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- Celebrate good attendance
- Reward good or improving attendance
- Ensure parents, pupils and staff work together on raising attendance levels across the school

Our aim is for over 96% whole school attendance and below 10% persistent absence for all groups of children. We talk about the attendance and punctuality of each class in assembly each week, with the winning classes being awarded our attendance and punctuality mascots for that week, which is then announced in the weekly newsletter to families and added to a prominent hall display. For example:



Children who beat our target of above 96% attendance for a term receive a certificate and a raffle ticket for a termly prize. Children with 96% or above for the whole year receive a medal in the last week of the school year.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The academy will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels in end of year reports. Poor attendance will be raised as a concern by letter or phone call from the Headteacher half termly.

In the Trust we define attendance using the following scale:

- High $\geq 98\%$
- Good $\geq 95\%$, but $< 98\%$
- Low $\geq 90\%$, but $< 95\%$
- Persistently absent $\geq 50\%$, but $< 90\%$
- Severely absent $< 50\%$

This can also be expressed in terms of days missed:

- 95% attendance = 10 school days missed
- 90% attendance = 19 school days missed

- 85% attendance = 29 school days missed
- 80% attendance = 38 school days missed
- 75% attendance = 47 school days missed

As a Trust we use a range of approaches to improve attendance of pupils who miss more than 1 in 10 of their lessons, including:

- Regular home visits
- Relational attendance meetings
- Referral to Early Help
- Drawing up an Attendance Plan with families
- Providing support from dedicated support workers

We respond to thresholds of absence as follows:

Monitoring and Analysing attendance

Woodlea Primary School will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This will look at individual pupils, cohorts and year groups (including their punctuality) across the school.
- Use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including SENDCO, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead).
- Undertake frequent individual level analysis to identify the pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This will include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes or days of poor attendance.
- Benchmark attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings should then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the board or governing body and local authority when appropriate.

At Woodlea Primary School we will investigate any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

'Persistent absenteeism' (PA) as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

'Severe absence' (SA) as:

- Missing 50% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

Persistent Absence, Severe Absence and the use of legal interventions

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level could cause considerable damage to a child's educational outcomes.

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' (SA) when their attendance drops to 50% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 90 sessions (45 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational outcomes.

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support. [Inclusion Support Service \(ISS\) | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://hants.gov.uk)

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution via the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

In line with Hampshire County Council guidance, we will notify the Inclusion Support Service of all reduced timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

Support Systems

At Woodlea Primary School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example: bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child. To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

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' as an event which cannot take place at any other time and is in the child's best interest to attend. Such absences are likely to be extremely rare, unavoidable and of the shortest possible duration. A family holiday is highly unlikely to fall within this definition.

The academy 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 discussed with the academy as soon as it is anticipated, before any arrangements are made and the absence form, available from the school office, is submitted, where possible, at least one week before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental 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/carers belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parents'/carers' 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 academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Any other absence which meets our definition of 'exceptional circumstances' above
- Any arrangements agreed with the academy for flexi-schooling, study leave or similar.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniforms.
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes.
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation.
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend.
- Absences taken without the authorisation of the school.
- Cost of holiday or activity being cheaper during term time
- Parents booking a holiday or activity in term time by mistake
- The need to meet everyone's commitments if a large group (family or friends) are going on holiday or taking part in an activity together
- The time of year and climate/weather conditions in the holiday location
- A holiday or activity won as a prize
- Another family member buys/organises the holiday or activity as a surprise
- Funerals or weddings of non-immediate family members

Parentally condoned (and unacceptable) absences include absences when:

- a parent gives in to a pupil who wants to stay at home
- a parent is ill
- a parent is using the pupil as a childminder
- a pupil is supporting other members of the family
- work patterns, for example shift work, make it difficult for the family
- a parent wants company
- it is the pupil's birthday, or a family member's birthday
- a parent does not care whether the pupil attends school
- a parent has taken the pupil shopping
- a parent cannot control the pupil

- a parent has taken the pupil to the hairdresser
- a parent is hostile towards the school or towards education in general
- a parent distrusts authority
- a parent is using the pupil as an interpreter

5.2 Part time timetables

- In agreeing a part time timetable, leaders are agreeing to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must be recorded as an absence in line with agreed coding.
- Part time timetables should
 - Have the agreement of the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with
 - Only be used in exceptional circumstances
 - Have a clear ambition to reintegrate to full time education including an end date and review dates
 - Be communicated to Children's Social Care if the pupil has a social worker and in all cases to the relevant Local Authority.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The academy will ask the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notice to parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Penalty notices are issued per parent, per child.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £80 per child within 21 days or £160 per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days following the National Framework for issuing penalty notices. If unpaid after 21 days this will result in a prosecution. Two penalty notices may be issued for the same child for repeat offences within a three year period. If a third offence occurs within three years of the first offence, the third case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court for prosecution, which can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500. Cases found guilty can show on parents' future DBS certificate. The payment must be made directly to the local authority, who process the payment. This money does not come to the Trust or the academy.

The Trust expects Headteachers to apply to their local authority, where appropriate, to issue a fixed penalty notice where a child has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions or more (five days) over a rolling ten-week period., which can span different terms or school years.

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

- 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.

Other powers available for local authorities and academies can include

- A Parenting Order which can mean parents or carers must attend a parenting class, counselling or guidance sessions and undertake any other actions directed by the court
- An Education Supervision Order which means a council will appoint a supervisor to help a parent or carer get their child into education

- Taking forward a prosecution as a last resort where all other routes have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate

6. Attendance monitoring

The Trust expects all its academies to use a management information system which provides information on absence and attendance patterns for individuals, groups and whole cohorts. This information is used to report to the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies with an analysis of any trends, concerns or evidence of successful approaches to improving attendance.

6.1 Monitoring attendance

Academy leaders will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data 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 academy will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Local Governing Body. The Trust will aggregate this data and report it to the Trust Board.

6.2 Analysing attendance

Academy leaders 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. This will take into account any temporary part time timetables agreed with parents in order to meet their child's needs.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Aggregate academy-level data across the Trust to identify any common concerns or outstanding practice.

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other academy 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

6.4 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 academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Use appropriate strategies set out in paragraph 4.6 of this policy.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by The Director of Standards and Effectiveness. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees through its Curriculum and Standards Committee.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 2: attendance codes from August 19th 2024

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
J	Interview	At a job interview, or interviewing with another educational establishment.
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence.
C1		Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2		Leave of absence for a pupil of compulsory school age subject to a part-time timetable
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
H	Family Holiday (Agreed)	A leave of absence for a family holiday is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.

R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.
I01	Illness	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for students absent due to non-coronavirus related illness (unless the truthfulness of the claim is in question). This code should not be used for medical or dental appointments.
I02	Confirmed case of Covid-19	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for pupils who have a confirmed case of coronavirus.
The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.
These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.		
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The school is closed due to an unavoidable cause or the student is unable to travel to the school. It can also be used where the pupil is in custody (for less than four months). This code is collected for statistical purposes but does not contribute to your attendance figures.
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.

Fixed penalty notice whole school warning letter

Dear parents and carers,

Attendance at school and legal intervention

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. [Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At Woodlea Primary School, our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential. This letter is to remind all parents about the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government is very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The DfE policy document entitled, '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' states:

All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence from school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority, must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

If the school does not receive a request for leave, the Headteacher will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the Headteacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention if they have at least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during 10 school weeks. The intervention could be in the form of a fixed penalty notice. Any pupil at Woodlea Primary School who meets the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered. If a fixed penalty notice is issued, the arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the notice. The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. A parent may receive more than one separate penalty notice resulting from unauthorised absence. When penalty notices are issued each parent will receive one per child. Therefore, each parent could receive multiple notices if they have more than 1 child who has been absent. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken. In some circumstances, the Inclusion Support Service may choose not to issue a further penalty notice in the same academic year and may instead choose to prosecute a parent under the Education Act 1996 S444. There is no right of appeal by parents against a fixed penalty notice.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Kind Regards,
Abigail Oliver
Headteacher

Example leave of absence request form (double sided)

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM WOODLEA PRIMARY SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Important Information for Parents – please read before completing this form

We expect every pupil's attendance at school to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence. **Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation during term time.** It is the Headteacher who decides whether a period of leave during term time will be authorised or not in line with legislation. The Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations 2006 (amended in September 2013) make it clear that Headteachers cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless 'exceptional circumstances' exist. **Circumstances which are not exceptional:**

- Cost of holiday or activity being cheaper during term time
- Parents booking a holiday or activity in term time by mistake
- The need to meet everyone's commitments if a large group (family or friends) are going on holiday or taking part in an activity together
- The time of year and climate/weather conditions in the holiday location
- A holiday or activity won as a prize
- Another family member buys/organises the holiday or activity as a surprise
- Funerals or weddings of non-immediate family members

Every request for leave of absence during term time will be reviewed on an individual basis with due consideration of the circumstances but the Headteacher can only grant leave of absence if they consider exceptional circumstances apply. If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Headteacher will determine the length of the absence to be authorised. All requests for leave of absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements are confirmed or money committed. This form must be completed in full by the parent who intends to remove the pupil from school during term time. Failure to make a request for a leave of absence in advance will result in the absence taken being recorded as unauthorised.

I have read the above information and wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school for:

Child's Full Name:	Date of Birth:	Class:

Parent Details (please list all parents)

First Name:		Surname:	
Date of Birth:		Relationship to child:	
Address and postcode:			
Telephone number:			
First Name:		Surname:	
Date of Birth:		Relationship to child:	
Address and postcode:			
Telephone number:			

Siblings: Please provide the name of any siblings of school age, and the school that they attend			
Child's Full Name:	Date of Birth:	School:	
Details of the absence			
Date of First day of absence:		Date of last day of absence:	
Total Number of days absent:		Expected date of return to school:	
Please provide the reason for this request and attach supporting evidence:			
Please read the following statement and sign to indicate you understand the this:			
I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress. I understand that a penalty notice may be issued if this request is denied and my child is absent during this period. I understand that a fine will be payable per child, per parent of £160 if paid within 28 days but reduced to £80 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days.			
Signed:		Full name:	
Signed:		Full name:	

To be completed by the school:			
Date request received by the school:		Total number of days requested:	
Child's Name:	Current % Attendance	Application Authorised or Declined?	
Reason for school's decision:			
Headteacher:	Mrs Abigail Oliver		
Signed:		Date:	

Example reply to leave of absence request

Dear [insert parent/carer's name],

Absence during term time – Child Name (Child DOB)

Thank you for your application for absence in term time for Child's name. Whilst we appreciate your circumstances, Woodlea Primary School do not approve any absences during term time unless they are due to exceptional circumstances as per the guidance from the Department of Education. The rationale behind this decision is that the Government has provided evidence that satisfactory progress at school is highly dependent on attendance.

Woodlea Primary School works closely with the Inclusion Support Service and if you choose to take your child out of school for the above unauthorised leave, we will notify the local authority and further action including legal action may be considered.

Please note that a Penalty is issued **to each parent, for each child** taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £80 which increases to £160 if not paid within the first 21 days. Thereafter if the Penalty remains unpaid after 28 days this may result in legal action be taken against you. Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

I have noted the dates that Child Name will be absent. Dates of leave and the registers will be marked with the G code (unauthorised family holiday) for this period.

If you would like to discuss the matter further, please contact the school office
adminoffice@woodlea.hants.sch.uk Tel: [01420 476342](tel:01420476342).

Kind regards,

Abigail Oliver

Headteacher

Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

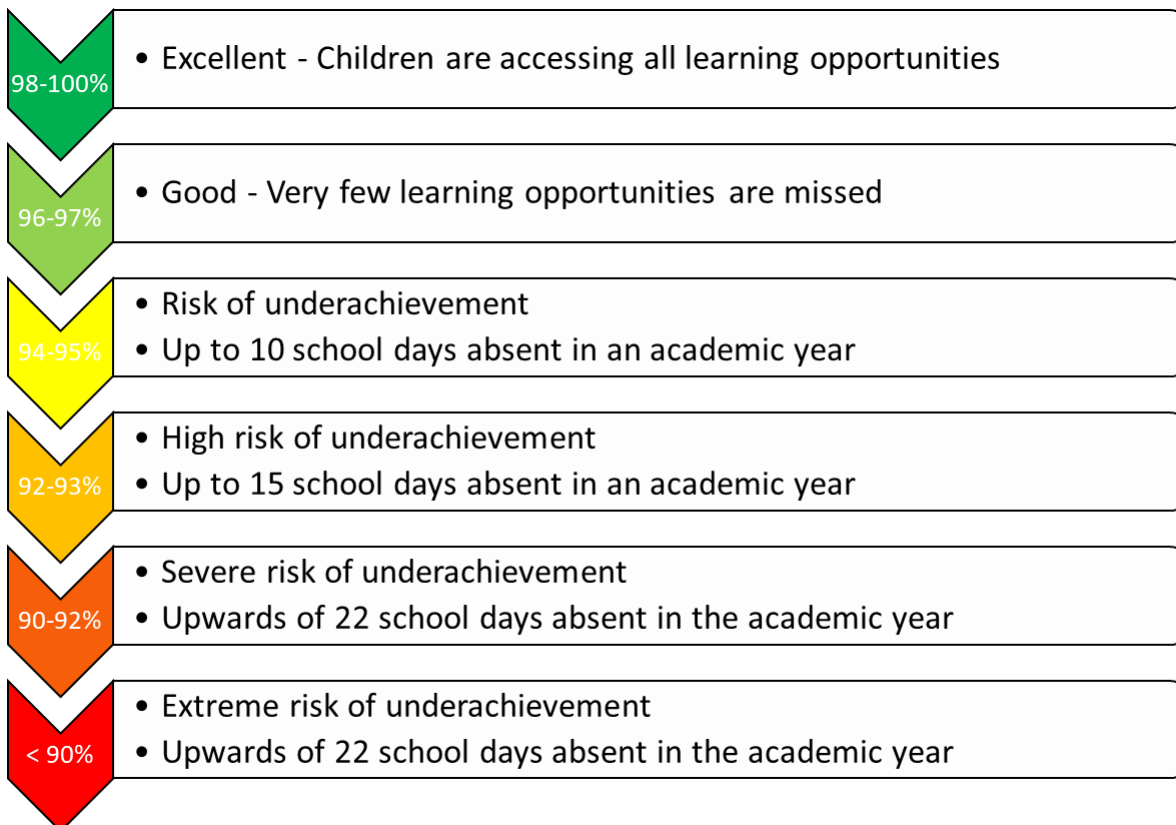
Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

We expect pupils to attend school for 100% of the academic year.

You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:

- Ensure your child arrives on time for school every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils must be in school when the register closes at 8.45am.
- If your child appears to be only slightly ill, send them in to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the school immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.



‘On the day’ absences: what should I do if my child is not ‘fit’ to go into school?

On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence by 9.30am.

Tel: [01420 476342](tel:01420476342) **Email:** adminoffice@woodlea.hants.sch.uk. In the message you must leave your child’s full name, year, class and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register.

Leave of Absence

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our 'Leave of absence request' form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence, via adminoffice@woodlea.hants.sch.uk. You will receive a letter in response, to advise if the request has been granted or declined.

Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive on time for a calm start to the morning. Your child is late to school if they are not here when the register closes at 8.45am. Arriving after 8.30am means that your child will miss 15 minutes of learning time.

The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment. I hope we can count on your support in this matter.

Please contact Mrs Oliver via the school office if you require any support with ensuring your child's regular school attendance.

Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Students

Attendance Policy Quick Guide for pupils

Roles and responsibilities:

All members of the school community have roles and responsibilities in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality.

Role of the pupils:

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the education opportunities available.

All pupils will:

- Ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.
- Be aware of their current attendance record and targets.
- Be aware of the consequences of poor attendance or truancy.
- Not leave school without permission.
- Inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied or feel unhappy in school.