Attendance Policy

Henry David Learning

Woodfield School

August 2026 – August 2028

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Reviewed by: Deb Wilson

Signed off by Proprietary Body

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1. Aims

Woodfield School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child the best educational experience possible. We believe that excellent attendance is fundamental to pupil achievement, wellbeing, and future success.

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

- Promoting a culture of high expectations for attendance across the whole school community
- Ensuring all pupils feel safe, supported, and motivated to attend
- Identifying and addressing barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity
- Working in partnership with families and external agencies
- Using data – driven approaches to improve attendance outcomes
- Supporting pupils to develop positive habits and personal responsibility

We aim for all pupils to achieve attendance of at least 96%, recognising that every day in school matters.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects 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 Proprietary body

The Proprietary body is responsible for:

- Setting clear expectations for attendance
- 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 Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Principal

The principal is responsible for:

- Overall implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school attendance trends and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Ensuring timely and effective interventions
- Authorising leave and issuing fixed-penalty notices, appropriate

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading whole – school attendance strategy
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis and analysing information to identify patterns
- Devising specific strategies and targeted interventions
- Building relationships with parents/carers and external agencies to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention and reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ali Lodhi and can be contacted via attendance@henrydavidlearning.co.uk

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for;

- monitoring and talking about attendance daily
- Identifying early signs of absence or disengagement
- Supporting pupils and raising concerns promptly

If a pupil is not in school class teachers should report this to the Attendance Lead.

Class teachers should discuss with parents any issues regarding a child's non-school attendance and punctuality.

Class teachers should look for patterns of non-attendance and work with the pupils and parents to identify any issues / barriers and support parents / pupils.

3.5 Parents/carers

Pupils are required by law to attend school for 190 days each year

Parents/carers are expected to

- Provide the school with up-to-date details of their address and emergency contact details. If there are any changes parents should keep the school informed.
- Make sure their child attends school and lessons every day on time
- Call the school to report on their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Work in partnership with the school to address any issues
- Provide the school 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
- Attend meetings and engage with support offered.

How can parents help?

- Do not allow your child to be absent unless it is unavoidable.
- Arrange for medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Ring and inform the school on their first day of absence
- Inform the school of any issues or barriers that may be preventing your child from attending school.
- Attend meetings as required by the school

Attendance during one school year	Equals days absent	Which are approximately weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 Days	2 Weeks	45 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	95 Lessons
85%	29 Days	6 Weeks	145 Lessons
80%	38 Days	8 Weeks	190 Lessons
75%	48 Days	10 Weeks	240 Lessons
70%	57 Days	11.5 Weeks	285 Lessons
65%	67 Days	13.5 Weeks	335 Lessons

3.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to

- Attend school every day and on time
- Engage positively with their learning.
- Take part in attendance support plans where required
- Understand how attendance impacts their learning and future
- Speak to their class teachers if they have any worries or concerns.

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 and once during the afternoon session.

The first session will be taken at 8.45 am and will be kept open until 9.15 am.

The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.00 pm and will be kept open until 1.30 pm.

In the Attendance Register the school will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity. The alternative provision will send details of the children's attendance, and we will code accordingly.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance will only be made by and the 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 authorized 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made as it is a legal document.

Unauthorised absence is if the school has not been notified why their child was off from school. It will also be used when the school is not accepting the reason being provided for the absence. Reasons include (however, this is not exhaustive):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for Non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a ‘U’. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, it is recorded as an absence for the session.
- Shopping trips
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- Their own or family birthdays
- Holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed ‘for exceptional purposes’ by the principal - may result in school applying to the local authority to issue a penalty notice or if you have previously been issued a Penalty Notice, the school may request a direct prosecution by the local authority.
- Day trips
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed

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 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school,
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or call into school personally and speak to the staff
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8.45am
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and provide any medical evidence if requested to support the absence.

(see section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school 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 school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this.

4.3 Planned absence

We encourage parents/carers to make routine 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.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed it will be marked as L code which equates to a Late Mark
- After the register has closed it will be marked as U code, and this equates to an unauthorised absence
- The school may send home ‘late notes’ to keep parents/carers informed.

If there are issues with getting a child to school on time parents/s should contact the principal to discuss this matter.

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 pupils' emergency contacts, the school may complete a face-to-face
- welfare check at the child's home.
- 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 to say that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If the absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer or Family Support Worker.

Parents will need to contact the school to inform them how their child is and when their child will return to school.

Unauthorised absences

If a child has unauthorised absences the school will

- Send a letter to parents explaining why the absence has been unauthorized.
- The school may request that parents provide medical evidence if they are concerned about the level of absences or authenticity of the absence.
- If there is no improvement the school will write to the parents to invite them into school for a meeting to discuss the non-school attendance. Support will be offered where required and within what the school can offer.
- If there is no improvement the school may refer the case to the Education Welfare officer who will make, contact with the parents/s and action accordingly

Legal Sanctions for unauthorised absences

The Education Act 1996 (Section 444) states: **"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence." As the parent/carers are responsible by law for ensuring that their child attends school regularly**.

All children of compulsory school age are required to attend school on a regular basis.

Where there is no improvement in the school attendance after support has been offered and provided, the school may refer a case to the Local Authority for them to consider legal action for the unauthorised absence.

The Local Authority may issue parents with a Notice to Improve

If there is no improvement the Local Authority may consider a Penalty Notice

Since 19 August 2024 If a parent / carer is issued with Penalty Notice, each parent/carer must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. Parents are issued with Penalty Notices per child. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

The Local Authority may consider Prosecution in the magistrate's court if parents have failed to pay the Penalty Notice within the time frames.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via a termly report. We will also make contact where there are concerns about a child's attendance. This may be by telephone or by letters where the school will alert parents regarding any concerns they may have about a child non-school attendance.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Authorised Absence may include (but is not limited to):

- Illness (with evidence, where required)
- Medical appointments (with evidence)
- Exceptional circumstances

Unauthorised absence includes (but is not limited to):

- Absence without explanation
- Term-time holidays without approval
- Avoidable absence

5.1 Holidays in term Time

We do not authorise holidays in term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance which s defined as;

"Rare, significant, unavoidable, and short-term situations".

All parents must make an application for a holiday prior to taking the holiday. Parents can access the Holiday application form accessible via our website or from the school office.

Only the principal 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 principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as …being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering 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 1 week before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, The principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. See Appendix 2

We will not consider applications for leave during term time:

- At any time in September - this is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class as quickly as possible.
- During assessment and test periods in the school's calendar affecting your child.

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best discussed between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support, even involving outside agency support such as the Education welfare officer, Local Authority Compliance Team or a Child Family Support Worker.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents/carers are, however, advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

6. Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance

As a school we encourage good attendance through a range of strategies including:

• Letters to parents to stress the importance of good attendance

• Individual certificates presented termly where full attendance (100%) has been achieved.

• Celebrate 100% Attendance via letters to parents

• Weekly class attendance shared with all children

• End of year trips

• Ensuring that good attendance is high profile in school through sharing weekly data in celebration assemblies and with class teachers

When attendance falls below expected levels for the school the following early interventions will take place:

- Courtesy letter to inform that attendance has fallen below the schools target of 97%.
- Medical Letter (if absence is due to consistent illness)
- Second letter of concern as their attendance has continued to fall below 97% and is now being monitored by school and the attendance team.
- Tutor/class teaching weekly monitoring.
- Pupil attendance matters meeting.

To promote good attendance, we will;

- Celebrate both high attendance and improvement
- Regular communication with pupils and families
- Attendance display and assemblies
- Incentives and rewards
- Embedding attendance within school culture

7. Attendance Monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

Woodfield School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half termly, termly and weekly and yearly across the school and at an individual level
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Proprietary body.

Thresholds and Response

Attendance Level	Response
96-100%	Positive reinforcement – certificates and rewards
93-95%	Early intervention and parent contact

90-92%	Targeted support and monitoring
Below 90%	Formal intervention and external support

7.2 Analysing attendance

Woodfield 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

Woodfield School will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers 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

Interventions strategies to improve data attendance will be, but not limited to;

- Early conversations with families
- Attendance support plans
- Pastoral and wellbeing support
- Referral to external agencies
- Legal intervention (where necessary and proportionate)

7.4 Reducing persistence 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.

Woodfield School 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 school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Agree an Action Plan/strategy to support a pupil in accessing their education on a regular basis.
- Setting short term targets to enable your child to get back into a routine in attending school.
- Offer In school support as required based on a child's needs.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- The school may have to refer certain pupils to the Local Authority under the Children Missing Education category and seek support from them.

Understanding barriers to attendance

We recognise that absence is often linked to underlying challenges.

This may include;

- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- Family or social circumstances
- Bullying or school-based concerns

Our approach

We will;

- Take a support-first, inclusive approach
- Work collaboratively with families
- Provide access to pastoral and wellbeing support
- Implement reasonable adjustments
- Engage external services where necessary

Reintegration and Support Plans

Where pupils have experienced absence, we will implement tailored reintegration plans, including:

- Phased returns
- Reduced or flexible timetables (where appropriate)
- Key worker or mentor support
- Regular progress reviews
- Clear, achievable attendance targets

8. Safeguarding and Attendance

Attendance is a key safeguarding priority.

Where the pupil is absent without explanation:

- We will contact parents on the first day of absence.
- Continue contact daily if necessary
- Conduct welfare checks where required
- Refer to safeguarding or local authority services if concerns arise

9. Persistent and severe absence

- Persistent absence: Below 90%
- Severe absence: Below 50%

The school will:

- Prioritise these pupils for support
- Work with external agencies
- Develop individualised action plan

10. Legal Intervention

Where attendance does not improve despite support:

- A Notice to improve may be issued
- A Penalty notice may be requested
- Legal proceedings may be considered

11. Deletion from the School register

For any pupil leaving Woodfield School, other than at the end of year 6 parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from *school*' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides the school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know and safeguard the whereabouts of our pupils. We ask parents to fill in the Removal from Roll Form.

It is crucial that parents/carers keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency.

The school will need to inform the Local Authority of any pupils who are going to be removed from the school's roll and reasons will be provided to the Local Authority when required

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years or in response to updated guidance by the principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the proprietary body.

13. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

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 the 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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Authorised leave of absence	Regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil on part-time timetable
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveler absence	Pupil is from a traveler community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
Q	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	"Lack of access arrangements"
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel because of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Y1	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	"Widespread disruption to travel"
Y3	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Part of the school is closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Unexpected whole school closure (different from code # for planned closure)
Y5	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Pupil is in the criminal justice system
Y6	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Absence due to public health guidance or law
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Holiday absence request

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Please read the following notes before completing this form:

- There is no automatic right to take a leave of absence
- All requests will be considered on their own merits
- The power to authorise a leave of absence lies with the principal

Pupil Name:	Tutor Group:

Reason for Absence:

Reason visit/trip cannot be taken in the school holidays:

First Day of Absence:
Last Day of Absence:
Number of school days missed:

If the absence is authorised, we will need to know. • The full address of your destination • The name and phone number of a person we can contact if your child does not return on the agreed date
Name of Parent / Carer:
Signature:
Telephone Number:
Date:

Please return the completed form to Woodfield School before making the bookings.

Decision and comments: Signature of Principal: Date:

• Please be aware that a Fixed Penalty Notice is likely to be issued if leave of absence is taken without the principal's consent. The penalty is currently £160 per parent/carer per child (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days)
• There is no right of appeal by parents/carers against a fixed penalty notice.
• If authorised leave is granted, but the pupil does not return to school on the agreed date, the entire absence may be unauthorised. If the child has still not returned after 10 further school days, the child's name may be removed from Woodfield School's roll.
• We may request to see copies of your travel documents to confirm your date of return if a period of leave is granted.