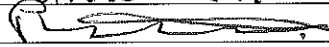
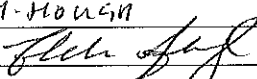


Woodfall Primary School

Attendance Policy

January 2013



In Consultation with		
Date Agreed	Name	Position
	P. D. HAWORTH 	CHAIR
	M. HUGHES 	HEADTEACHER
Date for Review:		

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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy was developed through a process of consultation with our CWAC Education Welfare Service and the Headteacher. It was approved by the Governing Body and applicable staff. It should be read in conjunction with Appendix A which details in-school procedures particular to Woodfall Primary School.

Role	Responsibility
Head teacher	To monitor the attendance throughout the school
Administrative Staff/Class teacher/Headteacher	To monitor the attendance situation of individual children or young people
Headteacher	To raise the level of attendance of those children or young people identified as being at risk/persistent absentees
Class teacher/Headteacher/Child Protection Officer	The welfare of children or young people in school
Governors	To keep a check on the general situation
Education Welfare Officer (EWO)	To support the school in achieving its objectives by following Local Authority Guidelines.

It will be reviewed annually.

2. ATTENDANCE POLICY STATEMENT

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases. The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parent(s)/carer(s) and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified. All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with home as appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

3. AIMS

- To improve the quality of school life
- To create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality'
- To demonstrate to pupils, parent(s)/carer(s) and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good regular attendance is an achievement in itself
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive

4. OBJECTIVES

- To involve the children or young people more in their school attendance
- To improve communication with parent(s)/carer(s) about regular school attendance
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility for children or young people's attendance
- To recognise the important role of class teachers and/or learning mentors in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- To ensure time and organisation within the school to enable the AIMS and OBJECTIVES to be met
- Effective working relationship with Education Welfare Service, and the reporting of half-termly figures to the service.

5. TARGETS

- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information
- To discuss the setting of targets for the school with the Education Welfare Officer and the School Improvement Partner
- To ensure that such data is available and used effectively by school managers and staff in conjunction with the EWO
- To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole school in a context of all known relevant factors and record these where appropriate
- To target resources in order to improve attendance and implement strategies where most appropriate and to undertake this within a reasonable time frame
- To keep parent(s)/carer(s), pupils and governors and the Local Authority informed of policy and practice
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which may have been set for some vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children.

6. CONSULTATION PROCESS

6.1 School Staff and Governors

The staff named above will review this policy and make any changes, which are deemed supportive of the aims of the policy.

6.2 Parent(s)/carer(s) will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- When their children first start at our school
- Via home school agreements
- Through newsletters
- At parent(s)/carer(s) evenings
- In the school prospectus

6.3 Children will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- During appropriate areas of the curriculum

7. PROCEDURE

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- - Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
- - Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)

It is expected that parent(s)/carer(s) will provide an explanation if the child is absent on the first day the absence occurs, at the start of the school day.

If contact, explaining the child's absence, fails to be made by parent(s)/carer(s), then the school will attempt to contact the home via our text service.

The Headteacher will regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Children with 100% or 99% attendance will be rewarded by the school by receiving a certificate.

8. IDENTIFICATION & REFERRAL

- Identification is made by the class teacher and/or administrative staff (cause for concern)
- Concerns are passed to the Headteacher which will be relayed to the parent(s)/carer(s) by letter
- Following this letter, there will be monitoring of the child or young person's attendance
- If there is no improvement, at this point, attendance letter 2 may be sent and parent(s)/carer(s) can be invited in for a meeting
- If there is no improvement the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service
- Parental duty will be reinforced to ensure full school attendance and support will be made by providing links to other agencies as appropriate
- A referral to the Education Welfare Service will consist of the referral form, copies of all correspondence to parent(s)/carer(s) and a print out of the child attendance certificate.

9. COMPLETING THE REGISTER

Registers provide the twice daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school.

The register should be marked using the codes advised by DCSF and Cheshire West and Chester Council.

As Woodfall has computerised registers, the Governing Body is responsible for registering with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Electronic registers will be printed out once a month and kept in the same way as manual registers. **These are legal documents.**

10. LATENESS

Pupils who are late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. School begins at 8:55am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Thirty minutes after the close of registration a late mark becomes an unauthorised absence. The register will officially close at 9.25am after this time children will be coded "U" which statistically counts as an unauthorised absence.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken. Where a child incurs 10 unauthorised absence marks (2 per day) a fixed penalty notice may be issued. If issued, a penalty of £50 per parent is payable within 28 days if unpaid this will increase to £100 to be paid within 42 days. Failure to pay may result in the Local Authority instigating legal proceedings where parents/carers may face a fine of up to £2,500.

11. FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

Parent(s)/carer(s) are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. **Parent(s)/carer(s) do not have the right to take their child or young person out of school for such a holiday. In exceptional circumstances** only the school may choose to grant leave of absence of up to 10 days in any school year. In extreme exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for longer planned absence, however, all such cases should be discussed with the Headteacher. A child who is absent longer than 5 days after an agreed return date, can legally be removed from the school roll and may be liable to prosecution. A child who is absent longer than 20 days after the agreed return date can legally be removed from the school roll and will no longer have a place at this school. **If a parent chooses to take their child out of school for 5 days or more without the approval of the Headteacher they may be issued with a Fixed Penalty.**

12. WHAT CAN PARENT(S)/CARER(S) DO TO HELP?

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child or young person is absent
- Reinforce to your child the importance of attending school
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary
- Be punctual

If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple
- Talk to your child's class teacher/learning mentor
- Talk to the Education Welfare Service

Parents may contact the Education Welfare Officer, who will work with them and the school to resolve the situation.

The school aims to have ALL children attending regularly and punctually and parent(s)/carer(s) need to know that should their child fail to attend in this way then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. Parent(s)/carer(s) need to be aware that Cheshire West and Cheshire Schools are operating the Fast Track Prosecution System in co-operation with the Education Welfare Service.

13. EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

The following are all at the Headteacher's discretion:

- Armed Forces leave
- Family respite
- Family crisis (Child in Care, Adoption, Bereavement, Severe medical needs)
- Return to homeland (Long distance visit to family members)
- Religious events/observances
- Examinations or approved sporting activity
- Family events at the discretion of the Headteacher
- Urgent medical appointments (routine appointments should be made outside of school hours)

Any other circumstances that do not meet the criteria stated above will be at the Headteacher's discretion.

In developing this Attendance Policy we have taken into account the fact that Cheshire is an ethnically diverse community. The school has incorporated practice, which guards against disadvantaging any sections of the community. Improving the performance of underachieving pupils is a key priority in the School Development Plan. This aims to improve the attainment of minority pupils across the County. Schools are aware and take into account the need for all public authorities to re-examine and make changes to their practice in promoting genuine multi-racial partnership. The school understands the need for on-going communication with parent(s)/carer(s) and pupils regarding this policy, particularly those new to the school.

Appendix A - Attendance Procedures

Specific procedures relating to pupil attendance at Woodfall Primary School only.

This policy is reviewed annually.

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at Woodfall Primary School are maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum. Our overarching aim is to encourage all parties involved in school life to work together to create a friendly, welcoming, inclusive school where each child is valued, achieves his/her potential and has such achievements recognised and celebrated.

Aims

- To ensure good (95%+) attendance is the norm.
- To make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including: pupils, parents/carers, staff and Governors.
- To ensure that pupils are aware of and involved in their own school attendance.
- To provide support, advice and guidance for pupils and parents/carers.
- To provide a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data.
- To provide positive and consistent communication between school and home.
- To implement a system of rewards and consequences to encourage regular and punctual attendance, thus showing that good attendance is valued.
- To promote effective partnerships with Education Welfare and with other external agencies.

Procedures and the role of the Class Teacher with regard to attendance

At Woodfall Primary School the **Class Teacher** is seen as the **key figure** in promoting regular punctual attendance.

Effective Class Teachers:

- Show a good example by always being punctual for registration and recognising its importance.
- Ensure that pupils who are late are recorded on the system. Ensure that all notes from parents regarding absences are scrutinised and passed on to our administrative staff to be recorded immediately on the system using the codes in the tables below.
- On a daily basis, monitor patterns of absence for individuals within their classes.
- Alert the Headteacher when attendance concerns arise. It is better to talk over these suspicions at their onset rather than let patterns become entrenched.
- Offer praise to individual pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality is good or improves.
- Efficiently carry out electronic registration procedures.

Class teachers must be in their classes no later than 8.50am. As children enter school, they should enter the classroom in a calm and orderly fashion. Class teachers should see this as the formal point at which we receive pupils from home and prepare them for the school day. Taking the register is to be the first task of the morning.

Electronic registers are marked with the following Code meaning:

B	Educated off site but still on our roll
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registered- applies to no Woodfall pupils currently
E	Excluded from school with no alternative provision made - e.g. fixed-term exclusions
F	Agreed extended family holiday e.g. trip to see seriously ill relatives in Australia, Hong Kong, Bangladesh, etc.
G	Family holiday- but not agreed by school or in excess of 10 days, thus unauthorised. Check before using this code
H	Family holiday (agreed)
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers close at 9.25am)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by other code)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Day of religious observance
T	Traveller absence - applies to no Woodfall pupils to our knowledge.
U	Late (after registers close - after 9.25am)
V	Educational visit or trip
Y	Enforced closure

Pupils arriving **after class teachers have completed the register** will be marked late by class teachers. Pupils arriving after 9.00am need to report to Main Reception. They need to be 'signed in' and have the time of arrival verified by the administrative staff before being escorted to class. Pupils arriving late on any three occasions in a half term must involve a conversation between the Headteacher and the child's parents.

We need to make it clear that our expectation is that pupils arrive on time.

Roles and Responsibilities - Co-ordinated Action

One of the key aims of this policy is to try to achieve a whole school approach to promoting good attendance where all involved are clear about what their role and responsibility entails. Some benefits of a whole school approach to tackling absenteeism are that:

- responsibility for promoting school attendance is shared by everyone in the school, rather than being left to particular individuals or groups;
- developing an attendance policy touches all aspects of a schools life, and relates directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum;
- opportunities arise for training that is cost effective and that raises the profile of this important issue;
- ongoing collection and analysis of data about attendance enables the school to check progress against national and local trends and against our own targets.

Key Roles

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for whole school attendance **who will:**

- review attendance data;
- have responsibility for implementation and review of this policy;
- ensure that all involved understand and have a chance to contribute to this policy;
- receive attendance concerns from class teachers and have input in pupil attendance planning where appropriate;
- receive and make decisions on holiday approvals.

and in addition:

- induct new staff on attendance procedures;
- monitor attendance on a regular basis, setting targets for improvement if appropriate;
- monitor the performance of individual classes, following up with class teachers instances where patterns of absenteeism are causing concern;
- review registers and attendance data on a regular basis;
- ensure that early contact is made with parents/ carers of poor attendees;
- meet with the EWO in order to discuss pupils/parents who have not responded to the school's strategies/interventions and, when necessary, make referrals;
- promote good attendance and punctuality through assemblies and reward appropriately.

SENCO will:

- work with the Headteacher to support pupils with faltering attendance;
- contribute to attendance planning for such pupils;
- liaise with relevant outside agencies where appropriate;
- provide support for the reintegration of long term absentees.

Administrative Assistant will:

- check for missing electronic registers and inform Class teachers;
- **on first day of absence** - If no contact from home, parents/carers will be contacted by text
- after morning registration, print a paper copy of Session Absences Report for use in case of emergency evacuation;
- generate statistical information as requested by Class teachers or SLT members;
- contact home as necessary re: lateness and attendance matters;
- work with Headteacher to process and authorise (or otherwise) term time holiday requests.
- **after three days** - If no contact from home, let Headteacher know and they will arrange for contact to be made with home.

Governors

Governors play a vital role by supporting the Headteacher and her staff in ensuring good attendance. Attendance figures will be reported at the termly Governors' Meeting.

Parents and Carers

Parent/carers must ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. If their child is not coming into school they must inform the school on the first day of absence. A note of explanation must be sent in on return to class teacher. Parents and carers have a legal obligation to ensure school attendance is as good as possible - pupils must not have time off unless absolutely necessary. For example, medical appointments can often be made out of school time or in holidays.

Attendance problems

Pupils will fall broadly into one of three groups:

Category One - Pupils with good or acceptable attendance. Pupils falling into this category normally have good attendance. They may have occasional illnesses, holidays or other authorised absence. Many will attract rewards for attendance. This is by far the largest group in school.

Category Two - Pupils with faltering attendance. Pupils falling into this category will probably have attendance in the 80-90% range. Pupils who fall into this category can have a variety of intervention strategies put in place and these include:

- letters home;
- attendance conferences with parents/carers;
- rewards and sanctions.

Category Three - Pupils needing urgent intervention. Pupils in this category have attendance rates of less than 80%. The number of such pupils is reported to the EWS who routinely ask the following questions:

- Can the school show that it knows the whereabouts of each child and the reasons for absence?
- Does the school have clear action plans for the re-admittance of non-attending pupils?

Headteacher, Class Teachers and SENCO to decide on appropriate course of action for these pupils possibly with EWO support. Pupils who fall into this category may not have absences authorised without providing evidence that they have sought medical attention for each period of illness. Clearly it is in everyone's interest to have the fewest number of pupils in this group as possible. Intervention will be by methods that include:

- individual attendance action plans from attendance meetings with Headteacher
- target setting
- rewards and sanctions
- support SENCO
- referral to EWO
- possible prosecution

Punctuality problems

Lack of punctuality can simply be an indication of poor time management on behalf of pupils and/or parents. Mostly such problems can be improved by efficient and consistent communication with parents/carers and pupils. Parental responsibility for punctuality needs to be stressed. In some cases, lateness has been identified by the EWO service as an indicator of more serious problems.

Improving attendance - strategies include:

- Certificates for 100% or improving attendance
- Rewards for good attendance
- Inter-class competition
- Headteacher presence at gate to hurry/chivvy/follow up persistent offenders
- Administrative Assistant to follow up unexplained absences
 - Dedicated assembly time
 - Publicise good attendance via newsletter and website

This list is not exhaustive and new and creative solutions are always being sought.

Attendance should be a standing item on Governors' agendas.