



WOODBIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

July 2022

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1. Aims

Woodbridge High School remains committed to providing a full and well-rounded education to all students, and recognises that poor attendance may be an indicator of more complex needs. We will take every opportunity to convey to staff, students and parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by promoting good attendance and reducing absence, in particular persistent absenteeism. We will act early to address patterns of absence and will perform our legal duty to ensure that all students experience full time education, to which they are entitled.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [School Attendance Guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's Statutory Guidance on [School Attendance and 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 \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [School Census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that tackling attendance is a school wide responsibility. Woodbridge High School will use quantifiable data, all available opportunities and supportive strategies to inform and support parents/carers' to meet their legal duty

Our support may include home visits, requests for parent meetings and Legal Review Meetings undertaken by our internal Attendance Panel, the aim of which is to work in partnership with parents/carers and students to understand barriers and identify appropriate support to improve attendance.

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body are responsible for monitoring attendance across the school on a termly basis. The Governing Body holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for implementing the school's policy, monitoring school-level absence data, reporting to Governors, supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students, issuing fixed-penalty notices where necessary and instigating court procedures where appropriate

3.3 The Attendance Officer

The School Attendance Officer monitors attendance data at an individual/group/whole school level. The Officer will report concerns about attendance to the Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for attendance and liaise with the Local Authority Education Welfare Service/Education Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence. The Attendance Officer will also liaise with parents to discuss attendance issues and advise the Headteacher on when to issue Fixed-Penalty Notices.

3.4 Form Tutors

Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting them on the school system. They must also work with the attendance team to follow up on unauthorised absence.

4. Recording Attendance

The school will maintain an accurate attendance register monitoring the attendance of all students. Students must arrive in school by **8.35am** each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at **8.40am** and will be kept open until **9.00am**. The register for the second session will be taken during Period 5 each day.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.00am or as soon as practically possible. The school will mark absence due to illness as authorised where sufficient evidence is provided. The school will expect the parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card, medication or other appropriate form of evidence when necessary. If sufficient evidence has not been provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

4.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as an authorised absence as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We expect, where possible, for parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours. When this is not possible, the student should only be out of school to attend the appointment. For example, if it is a morning appointment we expect students to return to school after the appointment. For afternoon appointments, students should attend school for the morning session and if possible, after the appointment. The student's parent/carer must also apply for all term-time leave of absence in advance, which will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances. Please see section 5 for more information.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

Students who arrive late before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. After the register has closed they will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. Students will be given a same day detention as a result of lateness to school, and parents will be informed.

We adhere to the guidelines set by the London Borough of Redbridge that should a student arrive late more than 7 times in a half term a penalty notice will be issued. Penalty notices will involve the recipient paying a penalty, currently set at **£60.00 per parent, per child** if paid within 21 days. This changes to **£120.00 per parent, per child** after 21 days and must be paid by day 28.

4.5 Following up Absence

We may follow up on absences via text message, telephone call, email and/or home visit. We will ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken where necessary to ensure students are safe and accounted for.

4.6 Reporting to Parents

Parents/carers will receive their child's attendance report annually in the written end-of-year report. Where a student's attendance is a concern, parents/carers will be notified at the earliest opportunity.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider it to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence can only be granted at the Headteacher's discretion and each application for term-time absence will be considered individually on its merits.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include illness, medical/dental appointments, religious observance, extenuating circumstances and traveller students travelling for occupational purposes.

Unauthorised Absence may include parents/carers keeping children off school without good reason. This may include looking after other children in the family, birthdays or holidays. These types of absences can lead to legal sanctions and/or court proceedings.

Unexplained absences are when students have been absent for a period of time without a reason being provided to the school. It can also include students who have frequent or particular patterns of absence, for example one day each week or odd day absences, without suitable explanation.

5.2 Reducing Persistent Absence

Woodbridge High School will work in supportive partnerships with our families to reduce absenteeism. In our drive to continually improve student attendance and protect education, the school will introduce its Attendance Panel. The Attendance Panel will convene once a term in order to give students and parents the opportunity to improve their attendance before we refer absence concerns to the Local Authority for legal action. The aims of the Panel are to support your child in attending school. Research shows students who attend school regularly are four times more likely to achieve five or more good GCSEs, including English and Maths, than those who are persistently absent.

5.3 Legal Sanctions

Under current legislation, a parent/carer commits an offence if their child fails to attend school regularly. The Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority will decide next steps, which can include prosecution.

Extended leave may result in the student being removed from the school roll after a period of absence of 20 days.

Persistent absence may result in the matter being referred to the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and/or be imprisoned for a period of three months and receive an Education Supervision Order.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

As a school we are committed to improving student attendance and recognise that working in partnership with our parents and students is essential. We also believe in celebrating students who have strong attendance. Those with 100% attendance across a term will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher to celebrate their success. Those with 100% attendance across the year will receive a rewards voucher.

7. Attendance Monitoring

The Attendance Officer monitors student absence on a daily basis. A student's parent/carer is expected to notify the school each day a student will be absent by calling the absence line. If a student's absence continues, the school will refer the case to the Family Support Team, which includes our Education Welfare Officer, Child Protection Officer and the Family Liaison Lead. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee. Those with low attendance may also be placed on an Attendance Contract.

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 school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing body. Woodbridge High School will collect and analyse attendance data to track attendance of individual students, key student groups and whole school. Students who are identified as needing additional support to attend school will be supported with targeted interventions.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed alongside guidance from the Local Authority and DfE and will be updated in accordance with this guidance at least every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Body.

9. Links with other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- The Behaviour Policy.

10. Sixth Form Students

The expectations of students in post-16 education at Woodbridge High School is the same as whole school attendance expectations. The school as a whole expects a minimum of 95% attendance to ensure all students can reach their full academic potential. The school should be notified of any absence before the start of the school day. Medical evidence will be required for absences of three days or more.

Persistent absence from school without a valid reason will result in the student receiving a written warning and a request for a parent meeting with our Attendance Panel. The outcomes from this meeting could include an attendance contract and further review meetings. Research shows attendance that falls below 95% can result in an average reduction of one grade at A level per subject and this increases to two grades when attendance falls below 90%.

11. The Role of the Education Welfare and Family Support Team

Our priority is to support students and parents and help remove barriers to good attendance. Our role also includes a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness. We will work with the Local Authority Education Welfare Service when students do not attend school regularly to ensure they have the support they need to attend and achieve.

12 Personnel

The named school governor with responsibility for attendance is.....

This policy has been written by the school's Pastoral Deputy Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead, in collaboration with the Family Support Team.

Date of Next Review ...

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student 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 student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student 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 as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Policy Reviewer: Mr F. Khan (Deputy Headteacher)

Approval: Initially approved via Curriculum & Standards Committee Chair's Action on 12th July 2022, in advance of approval by Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting on 8th November 2022

Date of Next Review: Autumn 2025