WOODBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

September 2024

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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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 dedicated to working closely with families to support and improve attendance, understanding that collaboration is key in addressing the challenges that may prevent consistent 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 is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment
- 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

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/ carer 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 board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The link governor for attendance has a role in monitoring pupil attendance and keeping the governing body updated in this area.

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Family Support Team to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Caroline Moore and can be contacted via 0208 506 5591. Or cmoore@woodbridgehigh.co.uk

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Assistant Headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Alex Baker and can be contacted via abaker@woodbridgehigh.co.uk

3.5 Class Teachers/Form Tutors

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office at the beginning of the lesson,
Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance for morning sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office during registration.

3.6 School Support Staff

School Support staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers [and pupils] about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers [and pupils] to the head of year/attendance officer where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents & Carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)
- Parents are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 08:00 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Family Support Team/head of year/form tutor (contact details on the school website).

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session, on time
- Contact the school to report their absence before 08:00 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence through the correct form, (Year 7- 11 here, or Year 12 – 13 here).

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.

It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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.

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. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

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.

Parents should request absence via the form on the school website.

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/carers 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 £80.00 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. This changes to £160.00 per parent, per child after 21 days and must be paid by day 28.

Woodbridge identifies and responds to punctuality issues through a combination of monitoring, communication, and intervention strategies. These include:

- Identification of Punctuality Issues – We keep detailed records of students' attendance, including arrival times. This data helps identify patterns of late arrivals.
- Communication and Early Intervention, this may include:
- Initial Contact with Students, Teachers or the family support team may have an informal conversation with the student to understand any potential causes
- Parental/Carer Notification. We inform parents/carers about their child's late arrivals, either through phone calls, emails, or letters, ensuring that the issue is acknowledged at home.
- Student Meetings. If punctuality continues to be an issue, a more formal meeting may be scheduled between the student and the pastoral team to discuss the reasons for the lateness.
- Investigation of Underlying Causes; We will consider the reasons for a student's lateness, such as transportation issues, home circumstances, or health concerns.
- Referral to Support Services: If there are deeper underlying issues (e.g., emotional, social, or family problems), the student may be referred to the school wellbeing team, social worker, or external support services.

Targeted Interventions, these may include;

- Wellbeing support
- Incentives for Improvement; We sometimes offer incentives for improved punctuality, such as rewards, certificates, or recognition in assemblies.
- Sanctions; Repeated punctuality concerns might result in consequences like detention, loss of social time, or being placed on a monitoring report.
- Parental/Carer Involvement; for ongoing issues, the school may arrange a meeting with parents to explore solutions together. We aim to work with parents/carers to create practical strategies, such as improving morning routines, advising on transport decisions or educating families around attendance and punctuality and the link to attainment.
- Escalation and External Involvement, this could include:
    - Educational Welfare Support from our Family Support Team to aim to support the family and address attendance barriers.
    - Formal Warnings; in severe cases, formal written warnings may be issued, emphasizing the legal responsibility of attending school punctually.
    - Fixed penalty notices; If it is felt support has been offered but no improvement has occurred, the school may look to issue fixed penalty notices.
    - Involvement of Local Authorities including child services: Chronic lateness could lead to involvement from local education authorities, especially if it contributes to overall absenteeism and contributes to a safeguarding concern for that student.

The school will track progress and continue to monitor each case identified with punctuality and absence concerns. The school also works with local schools to identify historic patterns in punctuality and attendance and therefore provide support and early intervention in a timely manner. This will include regular check-ins with students, parents/carers, or support staff to help ensure the issue is being effectively managed.

Addressing punctuality issues requires a balance of understanding, support, and consequences, ensuring that both students and families are engaged in finding solutions.

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. If we have concerns for the safety or whereabout of a child, we will consult the local authority or call the police.

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Cares

Parents/Carers will receive their child's attendance report three times a year in the progress checks and end-of-year report. Parents/Carers are able to see their childs attendance via the Sims app. Where a student's attendance is concern, parents/carers will be notified at the earliest opportunity.

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 the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. 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.

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- 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. Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school defines exceptional circumstances as rare, significant, and beyond the normal control of a student or their family. This could include serious illness, medical treatment or bereavement. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the form on the website.. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

If a pupil is over compulsory school age (e.g. sixth form), leave can be requested or agreed by the pupil or a parent they normally live with. A request should be made in writing to the Assistant Headteacher (Director of Sixth Form).

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Parent/Carer(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):
- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience

If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

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 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

The school will submit evidence to the Local Authority. The Local Authority make the decision based on this evidence and issue the notice to parents if appropriate. The school will be notified of this action.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

5.3 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.

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.

These include:

- Creating a positive school environment by foster a welcoming atmosphere and ensure that the school is a positive, safe, and supportive environment where students feel valued and respected.
- Promoting a sense of belonging by our values of inclusivity, making every student feel like an important part of the school community, regardless of their background, abilities, or circumstances.
- Engaging with parents and families via open communication. This can include phone calls, emails, or parent-teacher meetings to discuss concerns or challenges.
- Parental/carer education to inform parents/cares about the importance of regular attendance and the long-term consequences of frequent absenteeism via workshops and newsletters.
- Addressing Barriers to Attendance by identifying causes of absenteeism
- Providing targeted support depending on the specific needs of students. This might include mental health support, help with bullying issues, or assistance for families facing economic hardships.
- Collaboration with external services.
- Early intervention including monitoring attendance closely and regular check ins
- Recognition and rewards
- Positive reinforcement
- Incentive programs
- Engage and engage students in extracurricular activities
- Celebrating success and recognising progress.

By implementing these strategies, schools can create a culture where attendance is valued and supported, encouraging students to attend regularly and providing the help they need to overcome barriers.

7. Supporting Pupils who are Absent or Returning to School

7.1 Pupils Absence due to Complex Barriers to Attendance, Including Absence due to Mental or Physical Ill Health or SEND.

Our approach towards pupils with complex barriers to attendance may include:

- Gaining an understanding of the barriers, we aim to identify the root causes of absence. Barriers may include physical health issues, mental health concerns (e.g., anxiety, depression), family circumstances (e.g., caring responsibilities, domestic issues), bullying, or socioeconomic factors (e.g., housing instability, financial issues).
- We will engage in open dialogue with the pupil and family (and wider agencies involved when appropriate) by conducting meetings with the pupil, their family, and any other relevant stakeholders (e.g., social workers, healthcare professionals) to identify the factors causing absences. Through this we aim to foster trust and communication to

ensure the pupil feels heard and understood by developing a positive rapport, which can help them feel more comfortable attending school.

- Involving multidisciplinary teams, collaborating with healthcare professionals, SEND coordinators, therapists, and family members to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the pupil's needs and goals.
- We may provide personalised attendance plans (especially where there have been extenuating circumstances such as hospitalisation) that reflect the specific challenges of the pupil.
- We will offer emotional and mental health support, this could include friendship circles, encouraged attendance to chill out zone and mentoring referrals. This may include programs that teach coping skills, emotional regulation, and resilience to help pupils manage stress and anxiety around attendance.
- Where necessary making physical accommodations or adjustments to the learning environment, such as providing specialized seating or assistive technology.
- Arranging access to medical care if a pupil needs ongoing medical care, including coordinating with health professionals to create a care plans that include procedures for medication, emergencies, or physical therapy during the school day.
- Education around the benefits of good attendance and punctuality including the corelation with attainment.
- Careers support to ensure that students have researched pathways to support their aspirational next steps.
- Support for families through offers or connect families with services such as financial assistance, housing support, or mental health resources to alleviate external barriers affecting attendance.
- Workshops or direction to parenting courses for parents/carers. This aims to provide guidance for parents/carers on how to support their child's attendance and manage any challenges at home.
- Positive reinforcement, we recognise and reward improvements in attendance, focusing on positive reinforcement to support progress.
- Home visits and outreach work. We conduct home visits to safeguard young people, build relationships, and provide support to families.
- Monitoring and tracking attendance closely. We use data systems to monitor patterns of absenteeism and intervene early when signs of increased absence are detected.
- Fostering a sense of belonging by encouraging the pupil to participate in clubs, sports, or activities that foster a sense of belonging and give them something to look forward to at school.
- Support for staff to ensure teachers and staff are trained in recognizing and responding to the needs of pupils with SEND and mental or physical health issues.
- Peer education and awareness to promote understanding around SEND, chronic illness, and mental health in a sensitive way to foster empathy and inclusivity, while avoiding singling out the affected pupil and combating the stigma surrounding mental health, SEND and illness. We are passionate that our school culture promotes inclusivity.

By combining these strategies, we hope to provide a comprehensive and compassionate response to the complex barriers pupils face in attending school regularly.

7.2 Pupils Returning to School after a Lengthy or Unavoidable Period of Absence

Supporting students returning to school after lengthy or unavoidable periods of absence is critical to ensuring their successful reintegration. It requires a personalised and compassionate approach that addresses academic, social, emotional, and logistical needs.

Our approach towards pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence may include:

- Pre-Return Planning. This may include collaboration with the family and professionals before the student returns to discuss the return process. This ensures everyone is aligned on expectations and necessary supports. Within the meeting we aim to agree a reintegration plan that outlines the student's return to school to ease the transition back.
- Gather relevant information and ensure teachers and staff are informed about the student's absence (e.g., due to illness, mental health, family circumstances) and any accommodations or considerations they may need.
- Consider academic support, this may include identifying any areas where the student has fallen behind academically due to their absence. This can be done through assessments or informal discussions with the student. Once identified bespoke arrangements can be put in place to help the student catch up without feeling overwhelmed. We may also look at some learning assessments to consider any additional needs as we want to ensure that the content is accessible and not overly stressful.
- We aim to avoid overwhelming the student by balancing catch-up work with their current learning, being mindful of not overloading them with too much material at once.
- Depending on the nature of the absence we may consider a wellbeing referral to help the student cope with any anxiety, stress, or emotional difficulties that may arise from returning after a long absence.
- We aim to foster a welcoming environment. Teachers and staff should create a warm and understanding atmosphere where the student feels safe, welcomed, and valued. Avoid drawing too much attention to their absence, as it could increase their anxiety.
- We aim to build self-confidence through positive reinforcement, recognition of small achievements, and creating a sense of belonging within the classroom.
- Reestablishment of routine and structure to help the student adjust back into the daily routines of school life, including setting clear expectations and boundaries, as well as consistent support from teachers and staff.
- Attendance monitoring and follow-up to detect any patterns of disengagement early. This ensures that if they begin to struggle, interventions can be quickly put in place.
- As a wider approach we encourage empath, we aim to educate the class on empathy and understanding without singling out the returning student, promoting a culture of kindness, support and inclusion.
- Encourage participation in activities such as extracurricular activities, such as clubs, sports, or social groups, can help the student feel more connected to the school community and ease their social reintegration.
- Promoting positive relationships. We encourage the student to build new friendships or reconnect with peers through group activities that foster teamwork and collaboration.
- Holding regular review with the student, family, and professionals to assess the progress of the reintegration plan and adjust any supports as needed.

By implementing these strategies, schools can create a supportive, empathetic, and structured environment to help students successfully reintegrate after a prolonged absence, ensuring they feel supported both academically and emotionally.

8. 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 cast 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.

8.1 Monitoring Attendance

Woodbridge High School will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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.

Woodbridge High School will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to Year Coordinators to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
- Discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
- Explain the help that is available
- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
- Contact parents via letter when attendance trends begin to show a concerning pattern, this should enable up to work with in a supportive manner with parents/ carers before attendance reaches classification as 'persistent' and 'severe'.

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.

9. 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.

10. Links with Other Policies

- This policy links to the following policies:
- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- The Behaviour Policy.
- Bullying Policy

11. 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 or where the Sixth Form Team deems this reasonable and necessary.

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%.

Due to the specific nature of Post-16 education this policy should be read in conjunction with the Sixth Form Attendance Policy which includes more specific details on how we as a school support Sixth Form students in maintaining and improving attendance as well as actions the school may take in the event of persistent attendance issues.

12. 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.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience

D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school

Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered

#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Policy Reviewer: Ms Caroline Moore (Assistant Headteacher)

Approval: Approved by Curriculum & Standards Committee on 4th November 2024

Date of Next Review: Autumn 2027