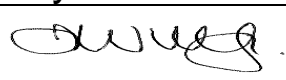
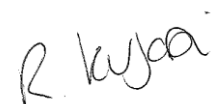




Wootton Community Primary School

PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Approved on:	24.05.22
FGB/Committee:	FGB
Responsibility:	Headteacher and Attendance Officer
Review Date:	May 2025
Signed by Headteacher:	
Signed by Chair of Governors:	

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is vital. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. There is clear evidence of a line between good attendance at school and high levels of attainment. Wootton Primary School recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school, on time and therefore having access to learning for the maximum amount of time. Our policy applies to all children registered at Wootton Primary School and is made available to all parents/carers of pupils via our website. This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. The whole school community - pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff, and Governors, have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's attendance, the Headteacher, Governors and teaching staff work together with other professionals, such as the Education and Inclusion Officer, to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. The staff work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel like valued members and look forward to coming to school.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with learning. This will impact on their progress and ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance is below 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives

This Attendance Policy ensures that all associated persons with our schools are fully aware of the actions necessary to promote good attendance. Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve the highest possible attendance for all children.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm.
- Raise awareness to parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education and Inclusion service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up on non-attendance at school.

Definitions

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised, consequently not all absences reported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Absence will be authorised in advance in the following circumstances:

- A pupil is educated off site (e.g. for a pupil to participate in an approved activity)
- A pupil is attending an exceptional special event/occasion and permission has been granted by the Headteacher in advance. In authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's attendance, attainment and ability to catch up on missed school will also be considered.
- A pupil participating in an educational visit authorised by the school.
- Where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours as much as possible), and return their child immediately after, or send them to school beforehand. Parents must meet their child at the main office and sign them out prior to taking them to their appointment/ Pupils will not be allowed to leave the premises without being accompanied by a parent/carer.
- Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control (e.g. extreme weather conditions)
- Where the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong.
- Where the local authority has a duty to make travel arrangements for the purpose of facilitating the pupil's attendance and have failed to discharge that duty.
- Where the pupil has been excluded from the school and no alternative provision has been made.
- In other very exceptional circumstances where a request could not be made in advance (e.g. family bereavement) and then for a very limited period.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without permission of the school. The absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer. The decision about whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.

Some of the reasons for not authorising an absence would be:

- No explanation given by the parent/carer.
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil is shopping during school hours.
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons (e.g. birthday)
- The pupil has been stopped on a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

Regular Attendance

All children are expected to attend school regularly in accordance with the Childrens' Act and Government/Local Authority guidelines. Regular attendance is determined by Wootton Primary, and should be the maximum number of days possible to attend school with withstanding any authorised absence. Wootton Primary recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and safeguarding children. Wootton Primary recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Wootton primary will challenge parents/carers about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Classrooms open at 08:35 on a school day, with pupils registered at 08:55. A pupil is late is registered after 9am. Pupils arriving after 09:00 must register via the office.

Procedures

Wootton Primary School will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Maintain appropriate registration processes.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data
- Communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, Governors, parents/carers and pupils.
- Have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school. Phone calls to be made to parents before 09:15.
- Inform parents/carers what constitutes as an authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Strongly discourage unnecessary absence (e.g. holidays taken during term time)
- Work with parents/carers to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality.

- Refer to the Education and Inclusion service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- Report attendance statistics to the LA and the DfE when requested.
- All staff raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Headteacher.

Responsibilities

All members of the school community have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the responsibilities that individuals have.

Headteacher

- Overall monitoring of school attendance including coordinating and promoting regular and improved attendance.
- Ensuring up to date attendance data and issues are shared with the Governing Body and SLT.
- Ensuring that all staff responsible for taking registers, including temporary or supply staff, are trained to enable them to carry out their responsibilities.
- Establishing trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the Education and Inclusion service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the Education and Inclusion service.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Ensuring the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school.

Class Teachers

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, particularly poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for absence offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing the Headteacher where there are any concerns.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up actions taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation meetings where necessary.

Administration Staff

- Accurately collating and recording registration and attendance information, for the Headteacher and the Governing body.
- Taking and recording messages from parents/carers regarding absence.
- Ensuring the absence/late data is recorded.

- Contacting parents/carers of absent children where no explanation for absence is known.
- Supervising electronic registration of children who arrive late, go home early or leave the site during the day for any reason.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance/absence punctuality.
- Accurately reporting attendance returns to the Local Authority and DfE as required.
- Organise meetings between the Education and Inclusion service and parents/carers of children with poor attendance and punctuality.

Parents/Carers

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly, correctly dressed and ready to start school punctually under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, between designated start/end of school day times.
- Contacting the office on the morning of every day of absence (e.g. illness).
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time (via letter or phone call). For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we require evidence from an appointment card/letter/text message).
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school.
- Working in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations and taking an interest in their child's work and activities.
- Keeping requests for absence to a minimum.

Pupils

Pupils are responsible for being aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher in the first instance. Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher/office a note from their parents/carers to explain the absence immediately on returning to school. All pupils also have a responsibility to follow school procedures if they arrive late.

Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice a day. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher in the morning and immediately after lunchtime. Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

The class registers will be preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct classroom for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Classroom doors close at 08:55. Access after this time is via the front office. Any pupil who comes into school after this time will be marked as late in the attendance record. Any such pupils will count as present but will be dealt with under the lateness policy as detailed in this paragraph. After 09:15, the pupil will be marked as an unauthorised absence. The absence is unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil being late. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will not be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education and Inclusion service. Children who have attended an appointment and subsequently come to school later will have their absence recorded as a medical absence. Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning and the important start of day activities. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness, parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of our concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school every morning of a child's absence, unless otherwise agreed. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence. All absences are recorded as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised' electronically. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Reception staff check all registers from 09:00 to 09:15 on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware of why the child is absent and therefore will contact the parent/carer to check the reasons for the child's absence. Reception will maintain a written log of all such contact.

Illness

When children have a serious illness they may be away from school long term – the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or can be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given home tuition outside of school. Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctors' note,

appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013, the Government abolished the right of a Headteacher to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, a Headteacher will only be able to grant leave of absence if they are satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist. Whilst Wootton Primary understands the financial pressures on families, the availability of cheaper holidays during term time, availability of holiday accommodation, overlapping dates to a school term and other such holiday arrangements are NOT exceptional circumstances. There are 175 non-school days in the year in which to take holidays.

Leave of Absence

Wootton Primary will consider every application individually. We will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision. We will not authorise time off school during periods of national tests. It is not policy to grant leave of absence other than in the most exceptional circumstances, for example:

- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- Parents who are subjected to a strict and un-negotiable leave of absence rota and evidence is provided to this effect. Please note that parents who are self-employed will be assessed on an individual basis according to the nature of their self-employment.

In considering absence for extended leave of absence (overseas trips) the school will take into account the following:

- A visit to family overseas may be important in terms of a child's identity and self-esteem as he/she grows up
- Parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holidays for at least part of their trip)
- The reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved
- Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. At Wootton, we rely upon parents to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be

opportunities for the parents/carers to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.

Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time, then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Education and Inclusion service. The EIS will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to the EIS. The EIS visits the school regularly to check and monitor attendance. They carry out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance. They work with the school attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if a school attendance meeting does not improve attendance.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded. Regular meetings are held with the Headteacher to discuss attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings, such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Attendance issues are complex with poor attendance often linked to the emotional wellbeing and health of a child, challenging family circumstances or safeguarding concerns. Where necessary, the attendance policy will be used in conjunction with the safeguarding and child protection policies.

Appendix A: Attendance Guide for Parents

When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The gates open at 08:35, and the register will be called promptly at 08:55. Lunch time registers take place when the children return from lunch.

What happens if my child is late?

By being late, your child will miss the important start of the day learning. This often underpins or supports subsequent learning. Therefore being late puts your child at a disadvantage to the rest of the class.

If your child arrives after 09:15, your child will be marked as absent (unauthorised), unless an acceptable reason is given. Pupils who arrive after registration has closed should report to reception and be registered. If a pupil is consistently late, a meeting may be arranged with the parents/carers, or the child will be referred to the Education and Inclusion service.

What should I do if my child cannot come to school?

We expect a parent/carer to phone school before 9am on the morning of the absence, and on every day of absence that follows, to state why their child is not in school today. If you do not call us, we will contact you. We also require a written explanation of your child's absence, either by letter, email or the completion of an absence form (appendix B). A reminder will be sent to you if we have not received your letter. If we do not receive a written explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's annual attendance record.

What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during school holidays whenever possible)
- Day of religious observation
- Exceptional family activity (e.g. bereavement)

Except in case of illness, permission for your child to miss school should be requested well in advance, giving full details of the proposed absence. By giving sufficient advance notice you will ensure that there is time available for the school to make any necessary further enquiries and for written notification of whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised to be sent. In cases of reoccurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate or other medical evidence or to provide details of medical personnel to enable the school to make direct contact.

Can we take family holidays during term time?

In line with Government legislation, the school policy is all family holidays should be taken in school closure periods. A 'Leave of Absence' from school may be granted in exceptional circumstances where an application has been made by the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides with on the absence notification form. The Headteacher will only grant leave of absence if there are exceptional reasons for absence from school during school term. Applications must always be made in advance and evidence may be requested to support any application. Where an absence has been unauthorised by the school and the time off school is taken, the school will refer to the Education and Inclusion service.

What is a Truancy Penalty Notice and when would one be issued?

The school has a duty to share their attendance data with the education and Inclusion service and to notify them when an unauthorised absence has been taken during term time. The law states that parents/carers are committing an offence where their children of compulsory school age are absent from school without good reason. A Truancy Penalty Notice is a financial penalty (£120 per child, reduced to £60 on payment within 21 days) issued by the Local Authority. There is no warning letter prior to issue of a Truancy Penalty Notice. The Isle of Wight Authority will issue each parent/carer with a Truancy Penalty Notice fine where attendance is below 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a 12 week window. Where the penalty is not paid in full and/or within the prescribed time limit the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parents/carers in the Magistrates Court.

I am thinking about taking my child overseas to visit relatives, what should I do?

The school recognises that such trips help children keep in touch with their extended family although parents would always be encouraged to make such trips during school holiday periods. We appreciate that due to the long distances often involved there may however be some overlap with term time. Should you be considering such an absence, you will need to put your request in writing to the Headteacher explaining the reasons and family circumstances for this visit. We may request evidence that this is not just a holiday.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure he/she leaves in the correct clothes and properly equipped for the school day. A clear, well managed morning routine helps establish school within the routine. Show your child that you value his/her learning by asking them about their school day. Follow the home-school agreement and attend parent evenings and other information sessions at the school to enable you to support your child's learning and progress.

My child is trying to avoid coming to school, what should I do?

Contact the school immediately and openly discuss your concerns. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, friendship issues, bullying or family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem, looking at the appropriate support available. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances with the Education and Inclusion service – the school can put you in touch with them.

What will happen if my child's attendance level falls?

The school monitors the attendance rate of all children as requested by the Local Authority. Where a child's attendance rate is considered too low, the Local Authority requires the school to take intervention action. The following actions will therefore be taken into accordance with Local Authority guidelines.

If a child's attendance rate falls below 95%, a letter will be sent home from the school to inform the parents/carers that their child's attendance level requires improvement and the child's attendance will continue to be closely monitored.

Persistent Absence Category

When attendance rates fall below 90%, a meeting will be arranged with the Education and Inclusion service and the parents/carers of the child to discuss

attendance, the support the school can offer and to agree a remedial action plan. Attendance will be monitored for a further 3 weeks. Any further decline in attendance will trigger referral to the Education and Inclusion service. It should be noted that there is a fast track procedure to referral where previously attendance has been poor.

Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school will phone you if we have not heard from you on the morning of the absence. This is because we believe that it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

Appendix B: Absence Form

Wootton Community Primary School- Absence Slip

Your child was absent from school on the dates specified below and we have not yet received a written explanation for their absence. Please complete and return this slip to the school office by If we do not receive it by this date, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Name of Pupil: Class.....

Dates of Absence:.....

Reason for Absence:.....
.....
.....
.....

Was medical advice sought for this absence? Yes / No

If yes (Please tick)

☐ GP appointment ☐ 111 call ☐ A & E

Signed Parent / Carer

Date.....

Appendix C: Leave of Absence Form

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

As parents, you have the legal responsibility to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. Applications for leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and the number of days given determined by the Headteacher.

If you wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child in term time, you will need to complete this form and return it to the school office no later than 14 days before the requested date.

Any leave of absence during term time which is not applied for or agreed to by the school will be recorded as unauthorised and will be referred to the Local Authority. This may result in a Truancy Penalty Notice (TPN) being issued or Prosecution under Section 444 Education Act for failure to secure regular attendance at school (see note below):

Name of Child:	Class:	
Dates I am applying for leave of absence for my child	From:	To:
Number of school days that will be missed:		
Full names of parents and/or carers:		
Home address of parents and/or carers:		
This leave cannot be taken during the school holidays because:		
I have requested leave of absence previously this academic year:	YES / NO	
I have requested leave of absence last academic year:	YES / NO	
I also have children at (please name school/s):		
Parent/Carer Signature:		
Date of Request:		
OFFICE USE		
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is:	Authorised / Unauthorised	
Signed:		
Date:		

TRUANCY PENALTY NOTICES

Unauthorised absence and persistent lateness may result in the issue of a Truancy Penalty Notice to each parent/carers, for each child for the period of absence from school. This will be issued as an alternative disposal to prosecution for failing to secure regular attendance at school.

The penalty notice is £60 per pupil, per parent/carers if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per pupil, per parent/carers if paid within 28 days.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice within the specified time will result in its withdrawal and will result in a prosecution under Section 444 Education Act for the non-attendance where the maximum fine is £2,500 and up to 3 months imprisonment.

Please note there is no provision for payment of the penalty notice in instalments