

# Woodhouse Academy

## Attendance Policy

Reviewed: Autumn 2020  
Review Date: Autumn 2023

### PRINCIPLES

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Holidays taken in term time without the consent of school

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the school's Attendance Manager. Woodhouse Academy has employed Attend EDC Limited as their education welfare consultant/officer. Attend EDC Limited is a service that in the first instance, along with the support from school, uses supportive measures to improve attendance. The school will also need to refer cases to the Education Welfare Worker (EWW) from the Local Education Authority: Local Support Team. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of

trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can use fixed penalty fines ranging from £60 - £120 and court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3-months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWW themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

## **PROCEDURES**

**Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.**

- If a child is unable to attend for any reason, or is late, parents/carers are requested to notify the school as soon as possible, on the first day of absence, by telephone call or email. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parents/carers
- When a pupil does not attend school, and no explanation has been provided, the school will contact the individuals listed on the relevant contact numbers stored in school, starting with the primary emergency contact
- If we cannot reach any of these contacts, or we do not receive a satisfactory response as to the whereabouts and safety of the pupil, we will immediately send a staff member to the pupil's home. If there is no response, we will contact the police
- Parents/carers will be informed promptly of any concerns that may arise over a child's attendance. This is by a phone call from our Attendance team who will follow absence protocols
- If possible, parents/carers should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours. If an appointment is unavoidable in school hours we would not expect the pupil to be absent for a full day. Making morning appointments should mean that the pupil returns to school for the afternoon session and vice-versa
- If a pupil is taken ill during the school day, the parents/carers will be contacted and asked to collect their child
- Children will not be sent home unaccompanied

## **Leave of Absence During Term Time**

The Principal cannot grant leave of absence for holidays taken during term time. The Principal may grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Requests received in writing will be considered on an individual basis.

## **Biddulph Schools Partnership Trust agreement**

Fixed penalty fines will be issued

if:

- Unauthorised leave of absence is more than 5 days (10 sessions), either taken as a block or built up over the year
- No notice is given of leave of absence

Please see page 9 for Staffordshire County Council guidance notes.

## **Registration and Late Arrivals (Morning)**

- All pupils should arrive by 8.50 am and go to their form room by 8.55 am
- Children must report to the office when they arrive late and the register will then be amended
- Registers will close at 9.30 am and at 1.55 pm. If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers are closed, he/she will be marked as 'absent'. The office will subsequently amend the register to read 'absent/late'.
- When a child is late, they must attend a break payback with the member of SLT who is responsible for attendance

## **MONITORING ATTENDANCE – CURRENT PRACTICE**

### **School Targets**

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and, liaising closely with parents/carers, will promptly investigate all absenteeism. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently. The school's target for attendance is **96.50%** and above.

- The school encourages a positive attitude to good attendance:
- Pupils with 100% attendance over three terms receive a certificate

- Attendance Celebration Breakfast every term for 100% attendance
- All pupils keep a record of their attendance in their planner
- Form Tutors monitor attendance weekly and have supportive discussions with their tutees
- Attend EDC Limited visits pupils/families with frequent or unexplained absences
- Each Year Group's attendance is examined regularly. Where absence is persistently poor, pupils receive supportive attendance clinics and parents are also invited in to discuss absence and how we can work together to improve it
- On the third day of absence, Attend EDC will complete a home visit if attendance is below 96.5% or there are Safeguarding or Welfare concerns

## **PERSISTENT ABSENCE**

- Any pupil whose attendance percentage falls below 90% is classed as a 'persistent absentee'. These pupils are automatically referred to the Educational Welfare Consultant, Attend EDC Limited, and escalated to the Local Support Team unless the school is satisfied by the explanation given for the absences.
- If pupils fall into the Persistent Absence category, the fixed penalty fining cycle process will automatically be initiated.
- If attendance does not improve, the Educational Welfare Consultant or Local Support Team could issue parents/carers with a fixed financial penalty notice. The decision may also be taken to start court proceedings
- Please also refer to the Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices  
[www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/home.aspx](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/home.aspx)

We work hard to ensure that our pupils are in school taking full advantage of the education, extra-curricular activities and personal guidance. It is clear to us that there is a direct link between good attendance and good achievement. We expect at least a 96.50% attendance from all our pupils. If this were to drop below 91%, your child would be missing half a day of school every week.

For any further support on attendance or information please contact your child's Form tutor. For specific information on the Penalty Notices you can log on to: [www.education.staffordshire.gov.uk/pupilsupport/SEN/areasofwork/attendance](http://www.education.staffordshire.gov.uk/pupilsupport/SEN/areasofwork/attendance) or call into school for a leaflet

## **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents/carers as the best way to ensure the highest level of attendance possible.

## Appendix 1

### ABSENCE AND ATTENDANCE CODES

Please visit [www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance) for the full guidance

Registration Code: / \ Present in school during registration / = am \ = pm

Code L Late arrival before register has closed

Codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity:

- Code B Off-site approved educational activity
- Code D Dual registered at another educational establishment
- Code J At an interview with prospective employers or another educational establishment
- Code P Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- Code V Educational visit or trip
- Code W Work Experience

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

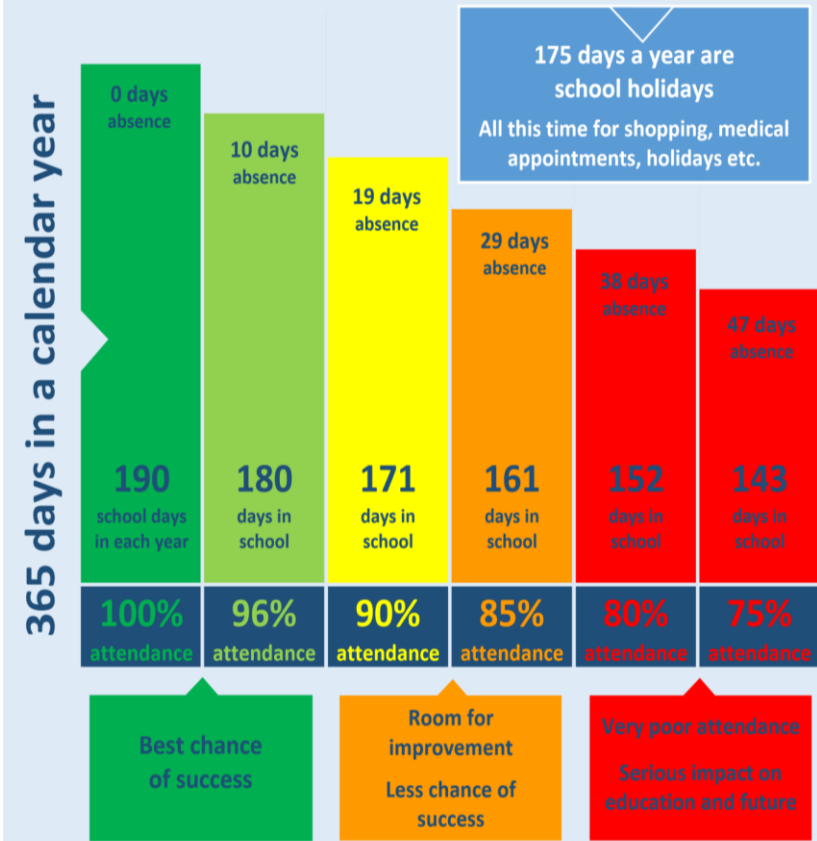
- Code C Leave of absence authorised by the school for exceptional circumstances
- Code E Excluded
- Code H Holiday authorised by the school
- Code I Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code M Medical or dental
- Code R Religious observance
- Code S Study leave
- Code T Gypsy, Roma or Traveller absence

Unauthorised absence from school:

- Code G Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher/Principal
- Code N Reason for absence not yet provided
- Code O Absent from school without authorisation
- Code U Arrived in school after registration closed
  
- Code X Not required to be in school
- Code Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Appendix 2

Good attendance means ..... being in school at least 96% of the time (180 - 190 days)



**DID YOU KNOW?** A two week holiday in term time means that the highest attendance you can achieve is **94.7%**

## Appendix 3

### Staffordshire County Council guidance notes for parents requesting leave in term time

- Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, **complete the attached form and send it to the headteacher/principal**. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. Head teachers/principals cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
- The Department for Education makes it clear that the headteacher/principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers/principals now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
- There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
- Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, in order to ensure that children receive the best education and prospects, they should be in school during term time.
- Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
  - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
  - the stage of the child's education and the child's progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
  - whether the parent made the request in advance
  - pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence
- Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Where parents have children in more than one school, a separate request must be to each school. The headteacher/principal of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, head teachers/principals may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
- Should the school decide not to grant leave of absence and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent\* per child. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.
- The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support head teachers/principals in challenging parents who ignore the law.
  - a. Generally the DfE states that parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

## Appendix 4

The Biddulph Schools' attendance target is 96.5%

The member of staff responsible for attendance      Assistant Principle

First Day contact      School Office

Education Welfare Worker      Biddulph Town Hall  
High Street  
Biddulph  
Stoke-on-Trent  
ST8 6AR  
Tel: 01782 297810