



Woodlands Academy Attendance Policy

Why we have this policy

High attendance at school is important for children to do well in their learning. Children need to be on time and present every day. We need you to work with us to help make that happen. We expect children to be at school unless there is an unavoidable or exceptional reason, or unless there is a health problem that happens for a long time and means they cannot come.

This is the Government's information about how children must attend school: [Working Together to Improve School Attendance. August 2024.](#)

We have this policy so we can try to:

- Support children and their parents/carers to be at school every day and on time.
- Make sure all children can access school.
- Make sure that parents/carers know about the laws to do with attendance.

At school, we know that attendance is important, and we will do all we can to support parents/carers to get children into school every day. Making sure children attend school is part of the work we do to make sure children are safe – called **safeguarding**. Absence from school can place pupils at risk of exploitation and may make it easier for children to slip into antisocial behaviour in the community.

What Everyone Must Do

Parents/carers:

- Make sure your child comes to school and know that you have a legal responsibility to make this happen.
- Make sure your child is on time for school for the register to be completed. If your child is late, it might be marked as an 'unauthorised' absence.
- Tell school if your child has a medical appointment during the school day. We would like appointments to be after school, if possible, please. We might ask to see the text message, email or appointment card just to check that the appointment is happening.
- Make sure you contact school before 9.30am if your child cannot attend school, telling school the reason.
- Requests to take your child out of school during term time must be made in writing to Mr Page. We won't authorise the absence unless it is for an exceptional reason. This means it must be unavoidable. If you take your child out of school even when school



have said it will be unauthorised, you might be liable for a fine issued by the Local Authority.

- Tell school if your phone number, email address or home address changes. Make sure we have more than one person's details in case we need to ring someone for your child in an emergency.
- If we suggest some things to help your child with attendance or problems, try and work with us to let them happen.
- Talk to us about any problems with attendance. This could be face to face or on the phone or email. It's better face to face if you can.

A child registered with a school has to attend school in the term after they are 5 years old. They have to attend until the last Friday in June when the pupil is in Year 11. This is called 'statutory school age'. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to make sure their child comes to school.

School will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of when your child is in school and if they are on time.
- Check children's attendance and act if they are not in school regularly.
- Contact parents/carers when a child is not in school if we have not had a message to say why from a parent/carer.
- Find out why a child is not in school if you have not given us a reason. Your reason may not mean we authorise the absence. If your child is off school for a long time or lots of times because of a medical condition, we might ask you for some information from a doctor to help us support your child.
- Celebrate when children come to school every day. At Woodlands Academy we have weekly Key Stage assemblies where we not only recognise good attendance, we recognise Children's displays of our values: Be Ready, Be Responsible, Be Respectful.
- Meet with the Local Authority Attendance team at Lincolnshire County Council to help us check attendance and see what else we need to do.
- Inform LCC if a child is not attending school enough.
- Decide what we think will help a child who is not attending school and put that help and support in place.
- Work with other services to help a child's attendance. E.g. other schools, Lincolnshire County Council, Social Care, Early Help, Youth Offending Serviced and the local community.
- Share the information about how much your child is coming to school with you and explain what good attendance is.
- Have the same rules for everyone about coming to school every day and on time.



- Have special support and follow the Local Authority Medical Needs Policy for children who cannot come to school because of medical or behaviour needs. This follows Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.
- Work with the Caseworkers at Lincolnshire County Council to support children with medical needs who cannot come to school every day.

The Attendance Champion for our school is Matthew Page.

The Attendance and Inclusion manager is Sue Killips

All staff at school, work hard to make sure attendance is good. This is overseen by the Headteacher.

If we are worried about your child's attendance, we will talk to you on the phone or by letter and you may be invited into school to talk to discuss any barriers. This is called a SAP meeting (School Attendance Panel) Outside agencies that may be involved with you child may be present at this meeting.

Children:

- Attend school every day.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Talk to their teacher about any problems they have that make them want to stay at home.

Governors:

- Look at the information concerning attendance every term.
- Ensure the policies are current and up to date.

The Local Authority (Lincolnshire County Council):

- Support school and provide guidance by having meetings with our attendance team.
- Work with us when children are showing high levels of non-attendance.
- Support us to decide what legal sanctions (penalty notice or prosecution) would be appropriate.
- Work out what support a child needs to be able to access education if they have medical needs.

What School Does for Attendance

We make sure all children can come to school every day, and other services help us to offer support when required. Some children, e.g. Young Carers, might need more help to be able to come to school. We show families where they can get extra help if they struggle with coming to school. Sometimes Social Care help us to decide if a child needs support. We will work with families in many ways to help them come to school. We have a special



person for safeguarding called a Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Chantelle Prue. Anyone can talk to that person at school if they need help.

We are required to share our attendance information with the Department for Education (DfE) so that we can see whether our children's attendance is as good as other schools, both nearby and in the whole UK.

We look at the information and if a child is not coming to school regularly, we will work with them to improve their attendance. Children who miss 10% of time at school might get a fine or penalty notice and we call this '**persistently absent**' (absent a lot of the time). Children who miss half their time at school (50%) are called '**severely persistently absent**' and if this happens, we will ask parents/carers to work with us to help and support the child.

We train every staff member to understand attendance so that everyone knows how to support children to come to school, and everyone knows who can help. We train, remind and support all staff to follow this policy. Good attendance is celebrated with children and families and reported to parents/carers at Parents Evenings and in end of year reports.

Supporting Attendance



As Woodlands Academy, we try to work together with parents/carers to improve school attendance. This means that we will **listen to you and support you. However, if this doesn't work, we may think about using the legal options below:**

When we need to, we will put support in place to help improve a child's attendance or lateness. If this doesn't work, and your child doesn't meet a target for attendance set by school, we will send your details to the Local Authority Attendance Team. This might mean you get a Penalty Notice/fine, or may be prosecuted by Lincolnshire County Council, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This could be a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

Lateness and attendance are checked every day by the **school attendance officer** who will:

- Look at pupil attendance for certain groups in school.
- Look at pupil attendance for children with medical needs.
- Check for pupils who are 'Children Missing in Education' and tell the Local Authority about them.
- Follow certain actions for parents who have requested to home educate their child.
- Look at the registers every day, checking authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons parents/carers have given for pupils who are not in school.



- Contact parents by telephone, email, or letter to find out why a pupil is not in school.
- Inform parents/carers if their child's attendance is low.
- Step One. Phone parents/carers and tell them that we are worried about a child's attendance/lateness.
- Step Two. Send a letter to offer support and explain the effect the absence/lateness is having on the child.
- Step Three. Send an invitation to attend a SAP meeting. This is a supportive meeting, that you choose to agree to. We discuss the needs of a pupil and family and find ways to support you so your child can attend school.
- Step Four. If the SAP does not improve attendance, or if the parents/carers do not work with the support even when the school asks them to, then we will ask the Local Authority to decide if a penalty notice/fine or prosecution can be used.
- At Step Three or Four, school might choose to use a **Notice to Improve** letter. This is sent by the school and the Local Authority. It is a final try to improve attendance before using fines and prosecutions. It is used when parents/carers do not engage with us to support the child.
- After issuing the Notice to Improve, if attendance does not improve, school will refer to the Local Authority for a penalty notice/fine or prosecution.
- Report pupils to the Local Authority when they have 10 'O' coded (unauthorised absence) sessions in school in a row. 10 sessions in a row = 5 days.
- Report pupils who have been off for 10 sessions of 'G' codes (meaning they asked for leave but the Headteacher did not agree to it) in a row to the Local Authority. We will ask them to use a penalty notice/fine or prosecution (it depends on how many times your child has had unauthorised term time leave – we explain this later).
- Report pupils with 15 days of 'I' (illness) codes to the Local Authority.

Registers

School Hours:

- The school is open at 8.45 am.
- Registers are open at 8.45am and close at 9.15am. Pupils who arrive at school after the register has been taken, but before it is closed, will be marked as 'L' - late on the register.
- Pupils who arrive at school after registers close at 9.15am, without an unavoidable reason, will be marked as 'U' - unauthorised late. This affects their attendance level.
- The end of the school day is 2.45pm

Lateness

Many of our pupils are transported to school often by local authority transport. Where this is the case pupils should be ready in plenty of time for the vehicle to arrive at their home. Alternative transport cannot be arranged if it is missed.



Reporting a Pupil Absence

Parents/carers must contact school on the first day their child is not in school by 9.30am. You must ring again every day that the child is not in school.

For any pupil not in school when the register closes at 9.15am, and school does not know the reason, a member of staff will try and get hold of the parent/carer.

The member of staff will ring every person on your child's record, starting with the first one, until we find out why the child is not in school. We will leave a message on voicemail if you do not answer. We will make a note of any conversations. Staff will mark the registers using one of the codes (see appendix 1 at the end of this policy).

If a parent/carer does not tell us why a child is absent, we will mark it as unauthorised. If we do not know where a child is, we may carry out a home visit.

General Non-Attendance

This is different to being absent due to illness or other authorised reasons, or for unauthorised term-time leave. General non-attendance is when a pupil is absent from school, without it being exceptional circumstances and without it being authorised by school. If your child does not attend school regularly, the school will work with you to find out why it is happening, and how school can help. If your child continues to be absent without authorisation from the school, then we may send your details to the Local Authority to consider a penalty notice or a prosecution. A pupil would need to be absent for 10 sessions (a morning or afternoon mark in the register is one session) over a period of 10 or more school weeks. Before school refer to the Local Authority for non-attendance, we will work with you and offer support. We may offer you an invite for an Attendance Meeting where we discuss the barriers to attendance and try to break them down. If you do not join in with the support from school, we may choose to set targets for your child's attendance instead. We do this together with the Local Authority. This is called a Notice to Improve and is a last try at improving attendance before fines or a prosecution is asked for.

The Different Types of Leave

Authorised leave

This is if a child has been off school for a reason that we agree with. For example:

- Illness or a medical appointment. If they are well enough, children should be at school for the rest of the day if they go to an appointment.
- Religious Observance – official religious days which are decided by the religion. E.g. Eid.



- The absence has been authorised by the Headteacher because it is short, exceptional and unavoidable.

Unauthorised leave:

This is when a child is away from school when school would say no. E.g.

- Shopping, hair appointments, visiting family, taking part in a protest or birthdays.
- A parent/carer has not given a reason for the child not being in school.
- A parent/carer has not completed an Absence Request Form.
- Being off school for something that the Headteacher does not think is exceptional.

The code given to a child in the register is the Headteacher's decision. They will use guidance from the Government (DfE) to make their decision.

Term-Time Leave

Parents may not take their child out of school for a term-time holiday. If you want to ask for time off school, you must put your request in writing to the Headteacher.

If school think you have taken your child out for term time leave, we will write to you and ask you to explain why your child was not in school. If you can't give school a reason, then the absence may be recorded as unauthorised, and we may send your details to the Local Authority for a penalty notice/fine.

Exceptional circumstances (*this means **rare, unavoidable, short***) will be looked at by the Headteacher.

If you request term time leave for any of these, they will **not** be allowed (this list is not exhausted). We would send details to the Local Authority for a penalty notice/fine:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad.
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term.
- Trip of a lifetime.
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates.
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Extending the time off if a pupil has not come back to school after an agreed absence.
- To celebrate birthdays.

Absence Due to Sporting Activities

Attendance at sporting events as a spectator or supporter will not be authorised. Training camps should be organised for during the school holidays. Absence to attend competitions will be assessed on an individual basis and information from the sport's



national governing body will be requested to assist with the school's decision-making process.

It all adds up – absence and learning hours lost

Attendance of student	Actual attendance over a school year	Equivalent whole days absent	Equivalent learning hours lost	
100%	190	0	0	Excellent
99%	188	2	10	Good
98%	186	4	20	
97%	184	6	30	
96%	182.5	7.5	37.5	
95%	180.5	9.5	47.5	
94%	177	13	65	Cause for concern
92%	175	15	75	
90%	171	19	95	Risk of penalty notice and/or legal proceedings
89%	169	21	105	

Penalty Notices

If a pupil takes unauthorised term-time leave for 10 sessions in a row or more (normally 5 days or more) they will receive a penalty notice.

The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per child, per parent/carer. If you haven't paid after 21 days, it goes up to £160. If you haven't paid after 28 days, you may be prosecuted in court. This could mean a fine of up to £2,500 and/or prison for up to 3 months per parent.

If you take **another** term time leave of 10 sessions (5 days) or more with the same child, in a three-year rolling period, the fine is £160 per parent, per child and you have 28 days to pay it. If you do it a third time, in a three-year rolling period for the same child, your details will be sent to the Local Authority for a prosecution (Section 444 Education Act 1996).

<div> <div>←</div> <div>Three-Year Period</div> <div>→</div> </div>		
First Term Time Leave 10 sessions (5 days) or more.	Second Term Time Leave 10 sessions (5 days) or more.	Third Term Time Leave 10 sessions (5 days) or more.



<p>£80 for each child per parent.</p> <p>E.g. if two parents take 3 children away, the fine would be $£80 \times 3 = £240$ per parent.</p> <p>The total would be £480.</p> <p>If you pay after 21 days, it rises to £960.</p> <p>parent.</p> <p>If you don't pay after 28 days = a prosecution.</p>	<p>£160 for each child per parent.</p> <p>E.g. if two parents take 3 children away, the fine would be $£160 \times 3 = £480$ per parent.</p> <p>If you don't pay after 28 days = a prosecution.</p>	<p>Prosecution.</p>
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Children Missing in Education

If a pupil fails to attend school for 10 consecutive days, without explanation, and the school does not know where the pupil is, the school will refer the pupil to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education. During this 10-day period, school will continue to try and contact you, and will liaise with any other services that your child is open to. The Local Authority will conduct investigations into the location and educational provision of the child.

Appendices

Register Coding:

Removal of some historic codes

As per the DfE's reform, the following codes will no longer be available for session attendance from the 24/25 Academic year.

Code	Description	DfE Description / Explanation
H	Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday.
J	Interview	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance



Y	Unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance
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The following codes have been added:

- C1 - Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 - Pupils on part-time timetables
- Q - Pupils unable to attend school due to lack of access arrangements
- Y1 - Unable to attend - Absence due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2 - Unable to attend - Widespread disruption to travel
- Y3 - Unable to attend - Part of school closed
- Y4 - Unable to attend - Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures)
- Y5 - Unable to attend - Pupils in the criminal justice system
- Y6 - Unable to attend - Absence due to public health guidance or law
- Y7 - Unable to attend - Any other unavoidable cause
- K - Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school
- J1 - Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution