

Attendance Policy



Woodcote Primary
School

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a) Introduction

- i) This policy was formulated by the Senior Leadership Team in close consultation with the Governing Body and Education Welfare Service.
- ii) We believe that every child at Woodcote Primary School has a fundamental right to be educated with good attendance being the key to personal development, learning and achievement in all areas. Parents, carers and teachers have a duty to encourage maximum attendance at school.

b) Rationale

- i) At our school we are committed to:
 - valuing and rewarding high attendance rates;
 - good practice, which encourages children to take a pride in their attendance and punctuality rates;
 - partnership with parents to ensure understanding, support and co-operation about high attendance rates;
 - encouraging children to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by attending regularly;
 - working in partnership with parents, carers, our Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion (Mrs Natalie Conway), School Attendance Officer (Miss Jane Smith) and the Educational Welfare Agency (WPA) to address difficulties and recognise external factors which influence pupil attendance;
 - identifying patterns of non-attendance at an early stage and working to resolve personal/social difficulties;
 - following efficiently the school systems for accurate recording and monitoring of attendance and punctuality.

c) Definitions

- i) Authorised absence
 - Authorised absence means that the school either has given approval in advance for a pupil to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes or telephones the school to explain the absence.
 - Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.
- ii) Unauthorised absence
 - An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the combined permission of both the school and a parent.
 - Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school and the school is not satisfied that the reason given for the absence is justified, even with the support of a parent.

d) Procedures

The following procedures should be followed:

- i) Children must attend school punctually and regularly. The Nursery starts at 9am; Reception 9.00am; KS1 8.55am and KS2 8.45am. Registration period is 10 minutes after school starts. Any child arriving later than 10 minutes after the start of school for their class is late and is marked as late in the register with an 'L' code. Parents whose children arrive late must notify the office so that the child's name can be recorded in the late book in the office. All registers are closed 30 minutes after the start of the school day and any arrival after this time is marked as unauthorised absence with a 'U' code (unless the child is late because of a valid, agreed prior appointment).
- ii) If a child is absent, parents and carers are asked to telephone the school on **each** day of absence by 10am. Where a child is absent for a prolonged period of time (e.g. admittance to hospital) parents should discuss this with the school office so that daily phone calls are not made unnecessarily.
- iii) Where attendance is a concern parents may be required to provide medical evidence when the child returns so that the absence is not recorded as unauthorised. Parents will be notified of this arrangement by letter.
- iv) If we do not receive a telephone call or message on the first day of absence by 10am we will send both a text message and an email to the parent/carer via our School Comms system requesting the reason as to why the child is not in school. If we do not receive a reply by the end of the first day of absence, we will telephone the parent /carer directly. If no response is forthcoming by the end of the second day then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If we have previous concerns about a child's welfare e.g. the child is on the child protection register or we believe could be in danger, we notify WPA and/or the police or Children's Services at the end of the first day of absence. This may also result in a home visit being carried out.
- v) Possible triggers for attendance letters could be as follows, please note this is not an exhaustive list of triggers and each case is considered on its own merit:
 - Attendance is below 96%
 - Late after the register has closed
 - Unexplained or unauthorised absences
 - 2/3 occasions of absence

e) Absence from Learning

- i) Parents receive a list of holiday dates at the beginning of each academic year (also on the school's webpage www.woodcoteprimary.croydon.sch.uk) and are expected to take their holidays outside term time. Children should attend school for the maximum number of days possible since absences can have a detrimental effect on their learning.
- ii) Any request to remove a child from learning during term time for the purposes of an annual holiday will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- iii) If it is necessary to make a request for absence from learning, such requests should be kept to a minimum and should not in any case exceed two weeks during a school year. **(See appendix 1)** Exceptional leave of absence will only be authorised if attendance at the time of request is above 96% and is unlikely to fall below 96% as a result of the requested leave.
- iv) Any absence from learning longer than two weeks in any academic year is treated as unauthorised, and may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice.

f) Strategies for improving punctuality and attendance

Staff at the school are committed to doing all they can to ensure children attend punctually and regularly but remain concerned about the number of authorised and unauthorised absences and by the incidence of lateness. In an attempt to improve rates of punctuality and attendance we:

- i) refer children who are causing concern to our Attendance Officer or WPA;
- ii) ask WPA to come into school some mornings to speak to persistent latecomers or to do gate checks and home visits;
- iii) send an individual attendance registration certificate to each parent/carer every term to show their child's attendance and punctuality record. This is also sent at the end of the academic year with their child's school report to give a view of the 'whole child' at school;
- iv) keep a record of those who arrive late each day;
- v) keep a record of parents and carers who have telephoned to explain their child's absence;
- vi) keep a record of parents and carers whom we have telephoned or left a message on the answering service;
- vii) ensure our registers are completed accurately
- viii) print out registration certificates for each class to highlight those who are persistently late or absent and use to review with WPA;
- ix) talk with parents and carers to identify whether support is needed to get children into school and on time. We signpost to parents the support network of parents local to their home who they may wish to liaise with and we have also used pupil premium to pay for children to attend breakfast club in order to improve their attendance and punctuality;
- x) involve governors in our monitoring procedures;
- xi) give a certificate in the final assembly each year to children with 100% attendance.
- xii) celebrate in assemblies and within the school memo

g) Recognising good attendance

- i) give a certificate at the end of each half term to children with 100% attendance for the half term in EYFS and KS1
- ii) give a 100% attendance badge at the end of each term to all children with 100% for the term
- iii) give a certificate in the final assembly each year to all children with 100% attendance

- iv) give a certificate and gift voucher to year 6 children with 100% attendance throughout their school career
- v) celebrate and share with families on ClassDojo each week the attendance for each class
- vi) Celebrate and share with families within the school newsletter the class with the best attendance each month
- vii) Acknowledge via letter, when a family has improved attendance and been removed from the EWO caseload
- viii) Acknowledge, via letter, when a family has been able to show improved attendance

h) Long-term absence

- i) When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will signpost and encourage children to access the school website in order that they can complete homework and Independent Learning Projects, as well as accessing additional resources which may be provided, in order that they can keep up with their school work.

- ii) If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the appropriate support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given

some tuition outside school.

i) Monitoring and review

- i) It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and this is incorporated within the Headteacher's termly report to Governors. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be and that any trends are being identified.
- ii) The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- iii) Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term concern about the attendance or punctuality of a particular child, this will be reported by the Attendance Officer to the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion or the Head of School/Headteacher, and contact will be made with the parents or carers.
- iv) This policy will be reviewed by the governing body biennially, or earlier if considered necessary.

Appendix 1 Request for Absence from Learning form

Application for Absence from Learning

Name: _____

Class: _____

Dates of Absence: From _____ to _____

Exceptional Reason: _____

Parent/Carer signature: _____

To be completed by the school:

Thank you for your application for leave of absence from learning for your child.

I confirm that your application for leave has been approved / has not been approved. This absence will be recorded as an authorised / unauthorised absence on your child's records.

C Baldock
Head of School

Appendix 2 Requests for pupil absence from learning due to exceptional circumstances

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he/ she is a registered pupil. Failure to fulfil this duty may result in the Local Authority prosecuting the parents.

The head in each school reserves the right to make individual judgements as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances. We may ask for confirmation of travel arrangements or other supporting documents.

As a rule, the financial factor when a parent claims that they are unable to afford a holiday during school holidays when prices may be significantly higher than in term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Similarly, the nature of a proposed holiday cannot be taken as exceptional circumstances.

We will not grant exceptional leave if:

- A child's attendance record over the previous 20 week period is less than 96% - even if any previous absence was due to unavoidable causes such as illness;
- The period of leave coincides with the start of term, or is near to or coincides with tests, SATs, exams or other significant events in the school calendar.

Date

Name and Address

Dear

Re: Name and Class

At Woodcote, our aim is for your child to reach their full potential and for this to happen; your child needs to attend school regularly.

I am writing to express my concern that, xxxx's attendance up date is only xxxx%. This is below the national average of 96%.

Our Education Welfare Officer, who visits the school every week to monitor attendance, has asked that we remind parents whose children have less than 90% of the importance of regular attendance at school. Absence is monitored very closely by the Education Welfare service and the Education Welfare Officer may contact parents where their child's attendance falls below or is close to 90%

I see that xxxxx's absences have been attributed to illness and although these have been authorised by the school so far if xxxxx continues to have such low attendance you may be asked to supply a doctor's certificate. I hope this will not be necessary and if you have any concerns about your child at school please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher in the first instance.

Please encourage xxxxxx to attend school with minor medical ailments as absence from school has a negative impact on learning as well as forming and maintaining friendships.

Meanwhile xxxxx's attendance will be closely monitored and I hope to see an improvement over the rest of the term.

I thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

C Baldock
Head of School

Date

Dear xxxx

Re: xxxx

Since we wrote to you on xxxxx, xxxx's attendance has failed to improve significantly, and is now xxxx%. This is below what we expect and to put this into perspective 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 days of school per year.

When looking into the reasons why xxxxxx has been absent from school, we noticed that the majority of the absence was linked to illness and/or medical reasons.

Due to the level of illness and/or medical absence, I must ask that if any further absence occurs, you should provide evidence to the school that shows that the pupil has been absent and is being supported by a GP or other medical professional. Some examples of evidence that could be used are prescriptions, appointment cards, doctor's notes etc.

If this evidence is not supplied when your child returns after an illness or medical absence, your child's absence will be recorded as an "unauthorised" absence.

This level of absence is high and I must ask you to ensure that your child attends school regularly every day. We will continue to monitor xxxxxx's attendance and will be looking forward to an improvement. Please let us know if there is any way we can support you with this. If xxxxx's attendance does not improve we may consider a referral to our Education Welfare Officer.

Yours sincerely

C Baldock
Head of School

Date

<Address>
 <Address>
 <Address>
 <Address>

Dear <Name of Parent>

Re:

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we monitor pupil attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance, we identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern, including those pupils who have arrived late to school on a number of occasions. We are therefore writing to you due to <Name of pupil>'s current number of late sessions:

Attendance	<current attendance> %
Number of late sessions	<current AA> %
Number of "unauthorised" lates	<current UA> %

Being late to school can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The table below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year just by being 5 minutes late to school every day:

5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school lost a year
10 minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year
15 minutes late every day = 10 days of school lost a year
20 minutes late every day = 13 days of school lost a year
30 minutes late every day = 19 days of school lost a year

We understand that the school mornings can be hectic, but when your child is late for school they are missing out on vital parts of their education. If your child arrives after 9.15am, he/she will have an "unauthorised" late mark which means that he/she will have an unauthorised absence for that morning.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Jane Smith on 020 8668 3374

Yours sincerely

C Baldock
Head of School

Date

Dear ????????

Re: Late Attendance - ????????????

Since I last wrote on ??????, there has been no improvement in ??????????'s late arrivals. He/she has continued to regularly arrive late for school and so far this year been late on ?????? occasions.

Our expectation is that all pupils arrive at school by ? at the latest and ?????????? is no exception. Arriving even a few minutes late is disruptive for the class and means that your child is regularly missing early work and essential instructions.

I will be monitoring ??????'s arrival times for the next 3 weeks and will hope to see a significant improvement.

Please arrange for ?????????? to arrive in time for the start of school. (If your child does happen to be late on the odd occasion, please ensure that you sign him/her in at the Office to prevent further disruption to the class).

Yours sincerely,

C Baldock
Head of School

Date

Name & Address

Dear

Re: Request for Absence From Learning

I refer to your Absence From Learning request to take () out of school for the period () inclusive.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 states that the Head teacher may not authorise any leave of absence during term time (i.e. holiday taken in term time).

I am unable to authorise this absence from learning, as it is not deemed as exceptional leave. Should you go ahead with this absence, a Penalty Notice request will be made to Croydon LA who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for taking a child out of school during term time. ***The Penalty Notice is £60 that must be paid within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.***

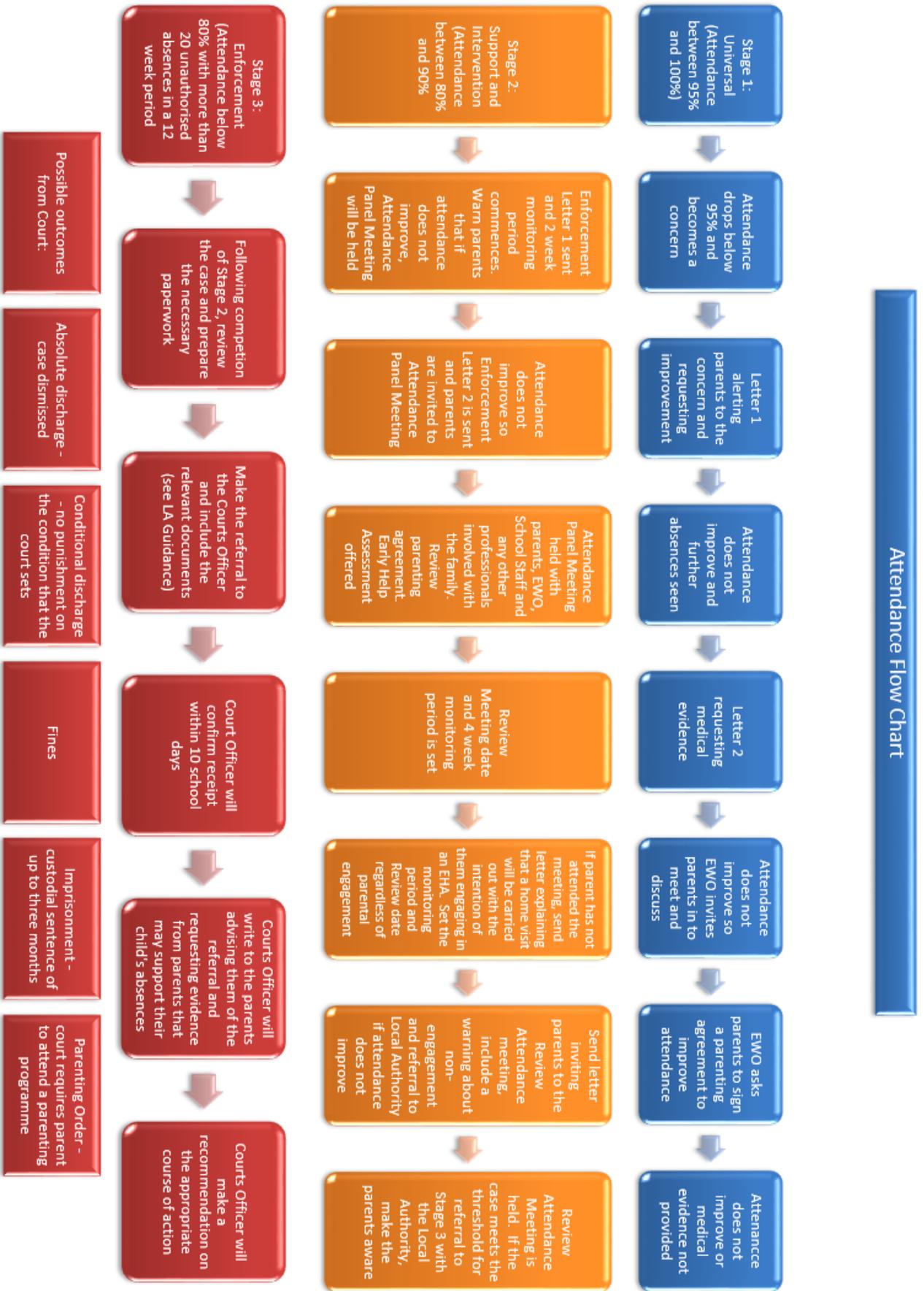
I trust that this will not be the case and that you make alternative arrangements for your leave during the school holiday period.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

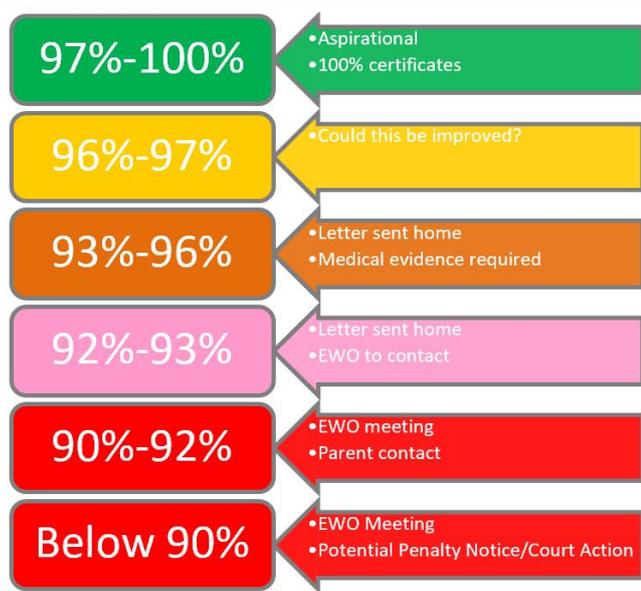
C Baldock
Head of School

j)



Appendix 9

Attendance Ladder



Impact of Attendance over an academic year		
99%	1 day	6.5 hours missed
98%	3 days	19.5 hours missed
97%	1 week	32.5 hours missed
96%	1.5 weeks	49 hours missed
94%	2 weeks	65 hours missed
93%	2.5 weeks	81 hours missed
92%	3 weeks	97.5 hours missed
90%	3.5 weeks	113.5 hours missed

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