

What counts as authorised and unauthorised absence?

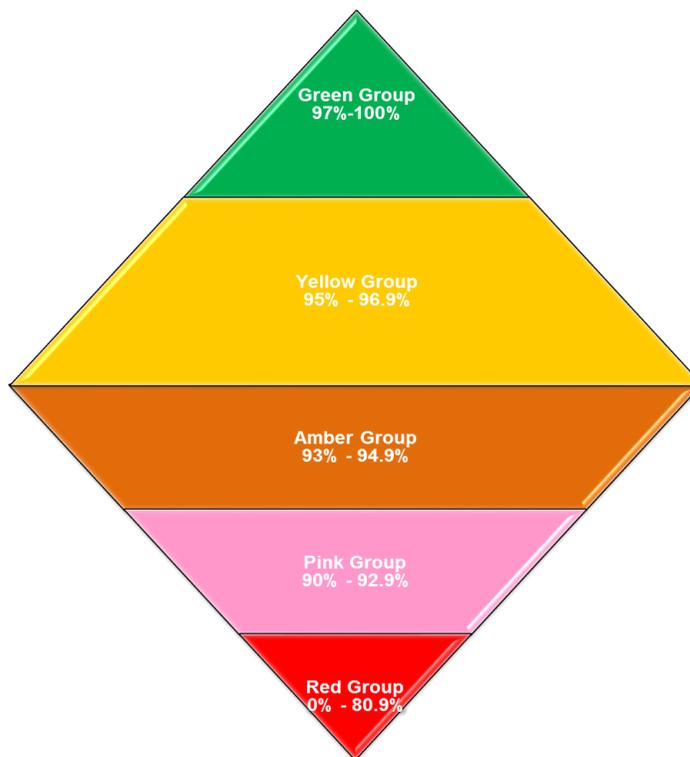
The only reason why a child should be off school is because they are really very unwell and unable to get through the day. We would encourage parents to send their child in to school, even if they are feeling a little bit unwell because of the obvious educational benefits. The exception would be if you had been advised by a doctor to keep your child off school. The following examples are not acceptable reasons to be off school:

- The birthday of a child or a family member
- Being tired after travelling back from a weekend away or after not sleeping well the night before
- Going to a concert or sporting event
- Moving house or having to look after pets
- Helping out at events or parties
- Christmas shopping

The only authorised reason why a student could be absent is for an approved activity.

Although 90% attendance each school year may sound good, this represents half a day off a week and over a 5 year period means that half a year of your child's education has been missed. These good habits are embedded when the children are in Reception and we would encourage all children to attend school even when they are below the statutory age of 5 years old.

We reward not just good individual and class attendance in school, but also much improved attendance from pupils. We know that we all need to work together on this matter to improve attendance and achievement of all our students and I thank you in advance for your co-operation.



Attendance Groups	
Green	No Risk
Yellow	Risk of underachievement
Amber	Serious risk of underachievement
Pink	Severe risk of underachievement
Red	Extreme risk - Court action

Children must attend school punctually and regularly. The Nursery starts at 9am; Reception 9am; Years 1 & 2 8.55am and KS2 8.45am. Registration period is 10 minutes after school starts. Any child arriving later than 10 minutes must be signed in at the office and is marked as late in the register. Parents whose children arrive late must notify the office so that the child's name can be recorded in the register in the event of a fire evacuation. All registers are closed 30 minutes after the start of the school day and any arrival after this time is marked as unauthorised absence (unless the child is late because of a valid, agreed prior appointment).

School Absence Line: 0208 660 9972 or 0208 668 3374

Woodcote Primary School

Aiming High – Succeeding Together



ATTENDANCE & ACHIEVEMENT

Success at Woodcote Primary is achieved by being in the right place, at the right time and by doing the right thing. Excellent behaviour and attendance underpin these principles and with 175 non school days a year for shopping, holidays and appointments the aspiration for all students must be 100% attendance each term. After all, prompt and full attendance will be a basic expectation for all students in their future careers. Good learning habits and routines developed in school will help prepare students for this, with the added bonus that excellent attendance will offer the best chances of success.

We understand that there are instances where a child is absent from school through, and wanted to inform all parents/carers of our procedures should your child be absent from school for any reason and of the steps we will take to both inform you of attendance and punctuality concerns and to support you and your child.

Support and Information for
parents & carers

100%

- Aspirational
- Well done - certificates

96%

- Could this be improved?

93%

- Letter sent home
- Medical evidence required

90%

- Letter sent home
- EWO to contact

87%

- EWO meeting
- Parent contact

84%

- EWO Meeting
- Potential Penalty Notice

ATTENDANCE & ACHIEVEMENT

What happens if my child is unwell?

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.

What if my child has an appointment?

Please make these outside of school time as much as possible. If your child has a medical appointment of any kind (i.e. GP, Dentist, Hospital, or opticians) please bring in either the appointment card or letter to confirm this. For morning or afternoon appointments we would expect the child to be in school for the other half of the day. If you need to take your child out of school to accompany you to an appointment this will be an unauthorised absence.

What happens if I don't phone on the first day of absence?

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 SchoolComms 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 Social Services at the end of the first day of absence.

What happens if my child is unwell for a longer period of time?

If your child is ill for a period of 5 days, we would expect them to have seen a health professional. For illnesses of this length we will ask to see medical evidence, either in the form of a certificate, a photocopy of the prescription or a note from your GP, confirming that your child has been to see them and the reason and length of absence or signed medical appointment card. During periods of prolonged absence or illness we will wish to work in partnership with parents to provide any support, provide work, where possible, and support children's return to school from illness.

What if my child's attendance drops below 96%?

Where attendance is a concern (below 96%) parents may be required to provide medical evidence when the child returns to school so that the absence is not recorded as unauthorised. Parents will be notified of this arrangement by letter. You may also be asked to attend an interview at the school with our Education Welfare Officer from WPA to discuss the reasons for the absence.

What happens if my child's attendance falls further?

We will contact you again by letter invited to attend a meeting with our EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) where a parenting contract will be drawn up with targets set for attendance to improve over the next 4 weeks. If the attendance is a major concern a parenting contract may be implemented immediately.

Will I get fined for my child's poor attendance?

Unauthorised holidays are automatically fined. For other unauthorised absences, we want to work with parents to ensure that their children are in school where they have the best chance of achieving their full potential. It will therefore only be after we have exhausted all possible means of support that we may have to involve Croydon's Education Welfare Service in issuing penalty notices for poor attendance.

How much is a penalty notice?

£60 if payment made within 21 days £120 if paid after this but within 28 days If I get a Fixed Penalty and don't pay, what happens? You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full. If full payment is not received within this time, the Local Authority is required under the Education Act (1996 section 444.1) to commence proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of unauthorised absence by your child. If proven, this can result in fines of up to £2500 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders, Community Sentences or Imprisonment (+criminal court charge and victim surcharge). If found guilty the parent will have a criminal record.

Who can I contact?

Office Manager—Mrs Hilary Evans
Assistant Head for Inclusion—Mrs Natalie Conway
EWO—Mrs Sarah Philpot
Head of School—Mrs Claire Baldock