

Woodchurch High School Church of England Academy



Attendance Policy 2024-2025

Approved: Autumn 2024

Next Review: Autumn 2026

*Let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good works, and glorify
your Father which is in heaven Matthew 5:16*

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1 Introduction

Woodchurch High School recognises that positive behaviour and regular attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school;
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of regular attendance and excellent punctuality;
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Taking appropriate enforcement action where deemed necessary including the issue of Education Penalty Notices.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of Woodchurch High School that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the *headteacher*, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

2 Promoting Regular School Attendance

Promoting attendance

At Woodchurch High school, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is integral to our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing (see appendix 2).

The Senior Attendance Champions responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at Woodchurch High school are:

Mr P Smith & Mrs E Jones

Attendance@woodchurchhigh.com

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Share attendance information with the Local Authority;
- Build strong relationships and work in collaboration to support families;
- Provide parents/carers regular attendance updates in our newsletters;
- Promote the benefits of regular attendance;

- Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law;
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance;
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the possible impact on their progress in relation to lost learning;
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.

Children who are absent from school or who are persistently late, can soon fall behind with their learning. Research conducted by the Department for Education (DfE 2016) confirmed that, as the level of overall pupil absence increases, the likelihood of pupils achieving what they are capable of decreases.

Parents of children of compulsory school age are, by law, required to ensure that their children receive a suitable education through regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Celebrating Regular Attendance

At Woodchurch High School, we recognise and celebrate good and improved attendance in a variety of ways, including;

- Attendance display in every form class room;
- Attendance has a high profile in whole school assemblies each week;
- Half-termly letters to update parents/carers that pupils who have reached their target attendance;
- Praise/shine postcard sent home to recognise and celebrate improved attendance;
- Weekly attendance reward for those pupils who attend every day on time
- Half termly incentives

3 Understanding types of Absence

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for Education Penalty Notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration at 9:20am are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session;
- Shopping trips;
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- Their own or family birthdays;
- Holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- Day trips;
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling (19 days) across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and cooperation of parents to resolve this. All pupils who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be a persistent absentee.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling (95 days) is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**'. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school due to other reasons. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with the family to identify underlying issues and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils, however we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

Punctuality

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. When children arrive late and miss the start of the school day, they can miss work and vital information for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, and this can be embarrassing and upsetting for the child. Lateness can also encourage absence, as some pupils would rather not attend school at all, than arrive late.

- The school day begins with morning registration at 8:45. Pupils will take part in form group sessions, assemblies and collective acts of worship as well as receiving important school information.
- Registers are marked by 8.50am. If children arrive in class after this time, they will receive a late mark in the register (code L).
- In line with recommendations from the Department for Education (DfE), registers will close at 9.20am. If children arrive after this time, they will be recorded as having arrived after closure of registers (code U). This counts as an unauthorised absence for that session.
- Any pupil arriving late should enter the school through the main entrance and be signed-in in accordance with school's procedures using our electronic signing in system on reception.

- If lateness becomes a regular occurrence, it will be treated in the same way as unauthorised absence, with parents/carers being contacted and invited into school to discuss the situation.

Absence Data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe. We provide regular attendance reports to form teachers/pupil progress leaders and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

We use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

4 Delivery of the policy

Responsibilities & Expectations of Parents and Carers:

- To ensure that their child attends school every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine and unavoidable reason that prevents them from so doing;
- To ensure that their child arrives at school at 8.45 am. A reason should be offered for any lateness;
- To inform school by 8:30am if their child is unable to attend on any day, together with the reason for absence by telephone 0151 677 5257 or via the My Child at School App.
- To trust that school staff will contact them during the school day if a child is ill in school and needs to go home.
- To ensure that school has contact information for at least two contacts and that these are kept up to date.
- To make all medical appointments outside school hours whenever possible, and to inform school in advance of any medical appointments that cannot be scheduled out of school time. For absence to be authorised as a medical absence, schools do require evidence, such as an appointment card or letter;
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods, and to be aware that there is no entitlement to withdraw children for leave of absence during term time. Any requests for leave of absence during term time should be made 4 weeks in advance via a Leave of Absence request form (Available on the school website) to the head teacher.

- To be aware of curriculum requirements and to be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during particularly important times such as SATs, GCSEs, and other exam periods;
- To provide evidence and advice from a health professional when requested to enable school to gain a greater understanding of their child's health issues.
- To talk to school staff as soon as possible should their child be reluctant to come to school for any reason, or if there are any other issues impacting on school attendance. This is so that any barriers to attendance can be quickly identified and overcome. In most cases the first point of contact should be the child's form tutor or the pupil progress leader.

Definition of 'Parent'

For the purposes of this policy and other education related issues, a **parent** is as defined under section 576 of the Education Act 1996:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of their relationship with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

Expectations of Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school and to obtain maximum benefit from the range of educational and other opportunities available to them.

Pupils are expected:

- To do all they can to attend school regularly and on time;
- To talk with a trusted adult about any issues that are making it difficult for them to come to school, or that are affecting their wellbeing in school.
- To be aware of their attendance targets, and to work towards achieving them.

Responsibilities of School:

- To demonstrate a strong and inclusive whole school attendance ethos that helps pupils feel that they 'belong'.
- To promote the importance of regular attendance to pupils and their parents/carers at every opportunity (via newsletters, assemblies, and any other communications between school and home).
- To action first day absence processes to obtain reasons for absence.
- To action home visits in line with our safeguarding policy for pupils who have had 2 days of absence with no contact from home.

- To have a staged approach to improving school attendance (see appendix 2).
- To establish effective procedures that enable staff to record, identify, and address concerns around overall pupil absence.
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences using the correct DfE prescribed registration code (see appendix 1). This duty also extends to ensuring that N coded absences are resolved in a timely manner. Parents should be made aware that if school cannot establish an acceptable reason for their child's absence, the missed sessions will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- To have sensitive support systems in place for vulnerable pupils which recognise the complexity of children's lives and family circumstances.
- To inform the local authority of any part-time or flexible education arrangements in place for individual pupils, together with plans for tracking and review.
- To identify an attendance lead who has overall responsibility for attendance.
- To encourage open communication channels and partnership working between home and school to improve attendance and punctuality. This will include meetings with parents and carers in school, where any support needs can be identified and addressed, together with the joint formulation of realistic plans for improving individual pupils' attendance.
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees. In addition school must have plans in place to support each persistently absent pupil and each severely absent pupil.
- To have support plans in place to ease pupils' transition between each phase of education when there is a change of school, with particular reference to the needs of more vulnerable children.
- To seek advice from the Authority's designated Locality Attendance Officer (LAO) both in respect of the management of whole school attendance matters, and of individual children whose attendance causes concern.
- To have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school and other support agencies in relation to the provision of additional support for pupils whose attendance difficulties are symptomatic of wider family issues or / and indicative of safeguarding concerns where a multi-agency response is required seeking advice from the allocated Early Help worker as and when needed.
- To engage in partnership working with the Authority's Attendance Service to ensure appropriate use of legal sanctions in order to reinforce parental responsibility for securing regular attendance.
- To analyse and evaluate a range of accurate attendance data to improve individual pupil and whole school performance, and to identify any vulnerable groups of pupils whose attendance is below what would be expected. There should be robust tracking procedures in place with respect to the attendance of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, children in receipt of

Pupil Premium, and children who are Looked After by the Authority or have an allocated Social Worker.

- To incentivise, reward and celebrate good and improved attendance on an individual, group, and whole school level – creating a positive culture in which good and improved attendance is highly valued. School can encourage ownership of their attendance reward schemes by seeking and acting on pupils' views in this respect.
- To provide governors with sufficient data and information about pupils who are not attending regularly or accessing education in the usual way, so that they can evaluate and challenge the effectiveness of school's arrangements.
- To refer children who are, or who are at risk of becoming, Children Missing from Education (CME) to the Local Authority in accordance with Wirral Policy.
- To notify the Local Authority of any child whose name is deleted from roll at parental request in order to pursue elective home education.

Responsibilities of the governing body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Responsibilities of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

Responsibilities of the Attendance Improvement Lead/Deputy

The designated attendance improvement lead is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Supporting the PPL/APPL in driving attendance improvements and addressing any concerns.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Actioning calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

- Working with the Local Authority Locality Attendance officer to tackle persistent absence
- The designated attendance improvement lead for attendance is Paul Smith and can be contacted via 0151 677 5257 or attendance@woodchurchhigh.com.

Responsibilities of the Form Tutors

Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.00am each day. Form tutors are also an integral part of the schools staged approach (see appendix 2) to improving attendance. Form tutors are expected to carry out the relevant interventions.

Responsibilities of the Attendance officer

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Maintaining all data in relation to pupil attendance and punctuality.
- Oversee the daily attendance of the school and action first day absences.
- Providing data to Pupil Progress Leaders, Assistant Pupil Progress Leaders and the Attendance improvement Lead to assist in the improvement of overall pupil attendance.
- Liaising with parents/carers regarding pupil attendance and queries.
- Facilitate attendance panel meetings with the Attendance Improvement Lead.
- Processing any leave of absence requests received.
- Submit Education Penalty Notice requests to the Local Authority and assist in further enforcement actions including escalation to prosecution.

Expectations of the Local Authority and Wirral Attendance Service

The Local Authority is expected:

- To promote regular school attendance of children in schools across the Authority, and to work towards breaking the cycle of poor attendance, reduced attainment, and social disadvantage.
- To meet, at least termly, with attendance staff within school.
- To help schools in their work to reduce overall, persistent and severe pupil absence. This involves working with school staff, parents / carers, children, and various partner agencies to develop and implement practices which can help raise and sustain individual pupils' attendance levels.
- To carry out statutory duties in relation to the enforcement of school attendance.
- To carry out statutory duties in respect of the identification and tracking of children known to be, or at risk of becoming, missing from education (CME).

Locality Attendance Officers, employed by the Local Authority, work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court

5 Children with Medical Needs

Attendance and medical needs

Woodchurch High School ensures that arrangements are in place to support pupils with medical conditions. Individual healthcare plans should be in place, and these should provide clarity about what needs to be done, when, and by whom in order to ensure that children with medical needs may access and enjoy the same opportunities at school as any other child.

The primary aim of educating children and young people who have medical needs is to minimise, as far as possible, the disruption to their normal schooling by allowing them to continue their education and to progress as much as their medical needs allow. 'Medical needs' encompass both physical health and mental / emotional health issues.

In circumstances where a child has complex health needs and is medically unfit to attend school, referral may be made to The Home & Continuing Education Service which is a local authority service currently based at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre. Medical referrals to the Home & Continuing Education Service must come jointly from both school and an appropriate health professional.

Medical Evidence:

The most common reason for children being persistently absent from school is illness. When pupils are having repeat absences due to reported illness, we may require more evidence to help decide whether or not the absence should be authorised, and to see whether any additional support is required. Children can be reluctant to attend school from time to time, or there may be other issues affecting attendance. It is never advisable for parents to 'cover' for their absence or to give-in to pressure to excuse them from attending. Covering up gives the impression that attendance does not matter, and usually makes things worse. It is always better to get in touch with school, to share concerns, and to plan a way forward.

Woodchurch High School accepts the following as medical evidence:

- GP certificate
- Letter from health professional
- Appointment card / letter (dated)

- Prescription / Medication in the name of the child
- Text message from GP or NHS confirming an appointment
- Care of the chemist – date stamped slip to show medical advice has been sought

In situations where a child's attendance record is of concern, usual practice would be for parents / carers to be invited into school to meet with progress leaders or the attendance team. This provides an opportunity for concerns from both home and school to be shared, and for an agreed plan of action to be put in place to address any identified difficulties.

Please remember that parents and carers are encouraged to contact school at an early point should they have any concerns that are impacting on their child's school attendance.

We acknowledge that children are at a higher risk of missing school if they have issues around their emotional wellbeing and mental health. This can then lead to further problems in terms of children falling behind with work, and of feelings of social isolation. It is particularly important in these circumstances that parents / carers work together with school to ensure that appropriate help and support is offered to respond to concerns as they arise. Early Help means taking action to support a child, young person, or/and their family as soon as a problem emerges. Parents may also wish to use Family Toolbox <https://familytoolbox.co.uk/> to identify possible sources of support or encourage their child to access Zillo <https://www.zillowirral.co.uk/>

6 Children on Part-Time Timetables and Alternative Provision

Part time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances where a part-time timetable is needed as a time-limited intervention to respond to a child's individual needs. This must always be in agreement with the child's parent(s)/carer(s). Woodchurch High School are required to notify the Wirral Attendance Service. Examples of when a part-time timetable may be considered are:

Medical issue

Emotional/Mental Health

Family/Friendship issue

Re-integration programme following absence

SEND – identified/awaiting specialist placement

SEND – unidentified/undiagnosed needs

It is important to stress that part-time timetable arrangements are used as a time-limited intervention and not to be used as a long term plan. Pupils will be expected to follow a reintegration plan to return to a full time education.

Pupils Attending Off-Site Educational Provision

Any pupil who is attending off-site educational provision should be marked using registration code D or B by their main school (according to the circumstances of the individual placement).

Code B should be used when pupils are present at off-site educational provision that has been approved by school. School is ultimately responsible for the safeguarding of pupils educated off-site, and use of the B code signifies that the education is supervised and measures are in place to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of the pupil.

School must ensure that the B codes reflect the daily attendance of the pupil at the off-site provision. For example, if a pupil misses a day due to illness, then the main school attendance register will show this day as an I and not a B.

It is important for agreement and clarity to be reached between school and the off-site provision with respect to arrangements for daily tracking and follow-up of any absence. There should be daily communication between school and the off-site provision in respect of individual pupils' absence.

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. The D code is used to signify that the pupil was not expected to attend the session because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Again, an agreement must be in place with respect to who has responsibility for the daily tracking of attendance and absence.

7 School Attendance and the Law

Attendance legislation

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The Local Authority has a range of legal powers to promote and enforce regular school attendance:

Penalty Notices (Section 444A Education Act 1996)

Prosecution of Parents / Carers in Magistrates' Court (Section 444 (1) / Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996)

Application to the Family Court for an Education Supervision Order in respect of the child (Children Act 1989)

School Attendance Order (Section 437 Education Act 1996)

Parenting Order (Section 8 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

Each case is considered on an individual basis, but the circumstances in which a Penalty Notice for non-attendance may be issued by the Local Authority include:

- Unauthorised absence from school
- Unauthorised leave of absence during term time
- Unwarranted delayed return from authorised leave of absence, e.g., in excess of the agreed number of days
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10 school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances".

It is a rule of Woodchurch High School that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (**not the local authority**) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, 4 weeks in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised which may result in an Education Penalty Notice being requested in line with the National Framework in respect of each parent believed to be involved in the absence.

The Local Authority retains any revenue from the Education Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs.

Non-payment of an Education Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Notice and will result in prosecution proceedings at Magistrates Court under Section 444 Education Act 1996. There is no right of appeal by parents/carers against an Education Penalty Notice.

Deletion from roll and admission to roll

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Schools can only lawfully remove a child from their school roll under certain circumstances in accordance with Government Regulations. Schools are required to inform the Local Authority of the details of all children who are removed from roll at non-standard transition times.

8 Safeguarding

Elective Home Education

One of the grounds under which a child can lawfully be removed from a school roll is if a parent notifies the Headteacher in writing that they are withdrawing their child from school in order to take full responsibility for provision of the child's education. School must notify the Local Authority, as the Authority will then have responsibility for assessing the suitability of education that is being provided for the child. The Authority must first consent to elective home education when a child has special educational needs and is placed in specialist provision.

Schools and the Authority respect that it is a parental right to pursue elective home education. It is, however, important that when parents opt to home educate, this is a positive choice and in the best interests of the child, rather than the option of last resort. Parents should be aware that elective home education is not a route to obtaining a place in a school of their choice which may have previously been declined, or a way of accessing alternative provision.

Children Looked After (CLA)

The attendance of children in the care of the Local Authority is also monitored by the Headteacher and Governors of the Virtual School. Use of the B and C codes should be agreed with the Headteacher of the Virtual School. The use of the N registration code for children looked after should be rare, as reasons for any absence should be obtained as a matter of priority. It is essential that contact is made with a child's social worker and the Local Authority's Virtual Team as soon as attendance concerns emerge. Attendance staff at school should routinely inform the school's Designated Teacher of the attendance rates of children looked after.

Link with Safeguarding / Education Neglect

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Woodchurch High School have a responsibility to ensure children and young people are kept safe. School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.

Every school has a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and can liaise closely with other services such as children's social care and early help services.

Schools should be alert to unauthorised absence as being a potential indicator of educational or wider neglect. In the instance where no contact can be made with

home, and/or students are not physically seen for a period of time, school staff will conduct home visits for welfare checks. In some circumstances where the student is still not seen it may be deemed necessary for the police to be informed so they can carry out follow up checks and ensure the student is safe and well. Neglect is the most common reason for a child to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan in the UK.

10 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by School and the Local Authority and updated in accordance with any new legislation or guidance, or changes to any other relevant procedures or documents. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Authority's policies on Enforcement Procedures, Children Missing from Education, and Elective Home Education.

Signed:

Date:

Date to be reviewed:

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

| CODE | MEANING | CRITERIA | STATISTICAL VALUE |
|----------|---|---|--|
| B | Attending any other approved Educational Activity | <p>B code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity under arrangements by school or LA in the session for which it is recorded</p> <p>The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority</p> <p>The activity is of an educational nature</p> <p>The school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place of the activity</p> <p>The activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved</p> | Attending an approved educational activity (present) |

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| C | Leave of absence exceptional circumstances | <p>Exceptional circumstances</p> <p>No blanket approach</p> <p>School discretion</p> <p>Generally a need or desire for a holiday or tother absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance</p> | Authorised absence |
| C1 | Leave of absence – performance or regulated employment abroad | <p>Performance license issued by LA or</p> <p>Body of Persons Approval issued by LA or</p> <p>Justice of Peace has given license for pupil to go abroad for performance or regulated purpose</p> | Authorised absence |
| C2 | Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable | <p>Exceptional circumstances</p> <p>If the school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part time</p> <p>temporary</p> | Authorised absence |

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| D | Dual registered at another school | <p>The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code</p> <p>Code d may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered</p> <p>Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absences are followed up promptly</p> | Not a possible attendance (neither present nor absent) |
| E | Suspended or Permanently excluded with no alternative provision made | The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education. | Authorised absence |
| G | Holiday not granted by school | <p>The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.</p> <p>A school cannot grant leave of absence retrospectively.</p> <p>If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.</p> | Unauthorised absence |

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| I | Illness (not medical appointment) | The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (Both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. | Authorised absence |
| J1 | Leave of absence for interview | Agreement in advance Application by parent child normally lives with In session absence recorded | Authorised absence |
| K | Attending Education Provision arranged by LA | The nature of provision must be recorded. Code K can only be used if the child is present at the provision | Attending an approved educational activity (present) |
| L | Late arrival before register is closed | The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed | Attending (present) |
| M | Leave of absence for Medical or Dental Appointment | Agreement in advance Application by parent child normally lives with Minimum time necessary Where pupil is absent at registration | Authorised absence |

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| N | Reason for absence not yet established | <p>Where absence is recorded as code N in the attendance register, the correct code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session.</p> <p>Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, school must amend the pupil's record to Code O</p> | Unauthorised absence |
| O | Absent in other or unknown circumstances | Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised | Unauthorised absence |

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| <p>P</p> | <p>Participating in a Sporting Activity. P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity.</p> | <p>P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded</p> <p>The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority</p> <p>The activity is of an educational nature</p> <p>The school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place of the activity</p> <p>The activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved</p> | <p>Attending an approved educational activity (present)</p> |
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| Q | Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements | There is a lack of access arrangements for a pupil whose home is in England if (a) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil for the purpose of facilitating the pupil's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty (b) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil and have failed to discharge that duty or (c) the school is an independent school that is not a qualifying school and (i) the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home (ii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for boarding accommodation for the pupil at or near the school and (iii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for enabling the pupil to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to their home. | Not possible attendance |
| R | Religious Observance | The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves) | Authorised absence |

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| S | Leave of absence for studying for public examination | | Authorised absence |
| T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | <p>The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such nature as to require them to travel from place to place</p> <p>To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school</p> | Authorised absence |

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| <p>U</p> | <p>Arrived in school after registration closed</p> | <p>Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session</p> <p>Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes.</p> | <p>Unauthorised absence</p> |
| <p>V</p> | <p>Attending an Educational Visit or trip</p> | <p>The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip</p> <p>Arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff</p> | <p>Attending an approved educational activity (present)</p> |

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| W | Attending work experience | <p>W code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity under arrangements by school or LA in the session for which it is recorded</p> <p>The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority</p> <p>The activity is of an educational nature</p> <p>The school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity</p> <p>The activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved</p> | Attending an approved educational activity (present) |
| X | Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school | <p>For part time attendance</p> <p>Absence for timetabled sessions to use appropriate code and not X</p> | Not a possible attendance(neither present or absent) |

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| Y1 | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available | The pupil is not able to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or Local Authority is not available | Not a possible attendance |
| Y2 | Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption | The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local national or international emergency | Not a possible attendance |
| Y3 | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed | Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those parts of the premises that remain in use | Not a possible attendance |
| Y4 | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed | Where a school was planned to be open for a session but the school is closed unexpectedly (eg due to adverse weather) the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed | Not a possible attendance |

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| Y5 | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention | <p>The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are :</p> <p>In police detention</p> <p>Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing or</p> <p>Detained under a sentence of detention</p> <p>A pupil's absence should be recorded under code Y7 if they are unable to attend because they are serving a community based part of a sentence of detention, referral order or youth rehabilitation order that requires them to be absent during the school day</p> | Not a possible attendance |
| Y6 | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law | <p>The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be:</p> <p>Contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care or</p> <p>Prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease</p> | Not a possible attendance |

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| Y7 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause | <p>This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at the school does not, in itself mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause.</p> <p>Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause.</p> | Not a possible attendance |
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Appendix 2: Attendance staged approach

Woodchurch High – Staged Approach to Attendance 2024/25

| Stage | Impact on learning | Percentage | Action | Staff |
|--|---|----------------------------|---|--|
| 0 | Regular Attendance = secured learning opportunities | 100% | Rewards & recognition | SLT/Pastoral/Attendance Lead |
| 0 | Regular Attendance = secured learning opportunities | 97 - 99.9% | Rewards & recognition | SLT/Pastoral/Attendance Lead |
| 1 | 95% - 9 days absence = 36 lessons missed | 95 – 96.9% | Form tutor to intervene, speak to the student and contact home if appropriate. All interventions logged on Bromcom | Form tutor/ Attendance Lead |
| 2 | 94% - 11 days absence = 44 lessons missed | 93 – 94.9% | Form tutor to liaise with APPL APPL to monitor and make contact with parents. All interventions logged on Bromcom | Form tutor/APPL/Attendance Lead |
| 3 | 93% - 13 days absence = 52 lessons missed 92% - 15 days absence = 60 lessons missed 91% - 17 days absence = 68 lessons missed DfE states at this point, 1 grade is dropped | 90 – 92.9% | Persistently absent Weekly monitoring Supportive meeting offered to remove barriers APPL/PPL Remind students and parents about the need to stay above 90% to avoid being in the persistently absent category Meet with the pupil All interventions logged on Bromcom | APPL/PPL/Attendance Lead |
| 4 | 90% - 19 days absence = 76 lessons missed 85% - 29 days absence = 116 lessons missed 80% - 38 days absence = 152 lessons missed DfE states at this point, 2 grades are dropped | Below 90% Below 50% | Individual attendance action plan Weekly monitoring Invited in for panel meeting – PS/EJ & JK May result in a penalty notice request Staff updated in weekly briefing regarding key students Locality Attendance Officer input All interventions logged on Bromcom Severely absent – more rigorous intervention and monitoring | PPL / Attendance Lead & Deputy / SLT / LAO |
| Most improved throughout an academic year will be rewarded for their efforts | | | | |