



Name of Policy: Attendance
Author/s: Gillian Barton & Chris Carter
Responsibilities: Deputy Heads SEND
Date: Autumn 2024
Version: 1
Review date: Autumn 2026
Links with other policies:

Links to procedures & notes filed elsewhere:
Approval: Governor Policy Committee 31/3/25

Woodlands Meed Equalities Statement is available on the website:
www.woodlandsmeed.co.uk under policies.

Woodlands Meed's Overall Aims: Building Unique Futures Together

This includes:

- Providing a safe, secure environment
- Recognising the individual needs and strengths of each child
- Planning and facilitating unique, enjoyable opportunities to maximise learning and potential
- Working with parents/carers and outside agencies to achieve the best for each child
- Ensuring opportunities from the wider community are utilised

Introduction

Children must attend school regularly and on time during term time. A child can only miss school if:

- they are too ill to go to school
- the school has authorised the absence

Authorised absences

Permission must be sought from the headteacher by parents planning to take their child out of school during term time. A child may be allowed to miss school for:

- a death in the family or funeral
- doctor, hospital or dental appointments.

If parents do not get permission and take their child out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are when a pupil has been marked in the school attendance register as being absent from school without authority.

This includes:

- any absence marked in the register as unauthorised ('O' or 'N' codes)
- persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken ('U' codes)
- a holiday in term time, which has not been authorised

Logging attendance:

School:

Registration is between 9.20am and 9.30am

Pupils arriving between 9.30am and 10.00am are to be marked as **L**.

Pupils arriving after 10.00am are to be marked as **U**.

In the case of lateness due to a transport delay use **L**.

College:

Registration is between 9.00am and 9.10am.

Pupils arriving between 9.10am and 9.40am at college are to be marked as **L**

Pupils arriving after 9.40am are to be marked as **U**.

In the case of lateness due to a transport delay use **L**.

Where an absence is recorded, a code must also be entered, as set out in the DfE document, School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities – August 2020. (see appendix)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Learners educated offsite and work experience

Particularly at college site, learners may take part in offsite learning and work experience. The appropriate codes must be used. In the case of work experience, a code should not be entered until it has been confirmed that the learner has attended the placement on the day in question.

Learners with agreed part time timetables (including Reception)

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education or where a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must be agreed by the Deputy Head SEND and have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

Holidays in term time

We would not encourage families to take children out of school for holidays during term time. However, we recognise that in a lot of cases, having a family member with additional needs makes it very difficult to go on holiday at peak times.

Permission must be sought by parents if they want to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time. This permission can only be granted by the Head Teacher or Deputy Head. (see appendix for request form)

Contact with families

The process for parents to inform school of absence is communicated via Induction packs and available on the website. Parents / carers must contact the school before 9.30am on the first day of absence by telephone and should provide a brief explanation of the reason for absence. There is an answerphone if they call before Reception opens. Parents / carers are requested to contact us directly and not send messages via transport providers or other pupils.

If parents or carers do not make contact with the school any absence will be recorded as unauthorised and further investigated.

Parents / carers are asked to inform the school immediately if the absence is because of any of the common contagious childhood illnesses so that we can liaise with school nurses and, in some cases, inform other parents.

After sickness or diarrhoea, 48 hours should elapse after the last episode before returning.

Parents are asked to confirm the length of illness or to continue to contact us daily until their child returns. During an extended period of absence – the class team or Well-being Lead should make regular contact with the family and record brief details on the child's Pupil Notes document.

Procedure for Learners Absent Without Reason

Reception will contact parents by telephone and/or School comms. When contact is made with parents the register can be changed to the appropriate code (including a comment if necessary).

Priority must be given to 'Children We Care For' and a member of the safeguarding team will inform social workers on the same day about any looked after children and children under a child protection plan still absent without reason after reasonable investigation.

On both sites – the receptionist will email Wellbeing leads and DHT SEND a list of any pupils who are still-absent without reason by 12.00pm.

Unauthorised absence levels are monitored and investigated and where attendance levels become a concern these will be discussed with families. If attendance continues to be a concern and falls below a particular level within a timeframe, this may lead to the involvement of the West Sussex Early Help or 'Pupil Entitlement' services. If concerns continue, these can result in legal action and possible fines via Pupil Entitlement.

For further details about this service see: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/school-attendance-and-behaviour/school-absences/#role-of-pupil-entitlement-investigation>

Monitoring and improving attendance

The Well-being teams on both sites monitor attendance daily. A record is maintained detailing learners whose attendance is below 90%. Support is offered to class teams

and families to effectively manage and improve attendance, including strategies and initiatives.

A termly overview of attendance detailing individual reasons for reduced attendance and strategies being employed to improve is reported to the Governors' Learning & Well-being Committee by the Deputy Head SEND (school and college) and in the Head Teacher's annual report.

Appendix

- Request for absence form
- Attendance codes