



# How Wood Primary School and Nursery

## Attendance Policy



Reviewed: JANUARY 2020  
To be reviewed every two years by Curriculum Committee  
Next Review: JANUARY 2022

## **How Wood School Attendance Policy**

How Wood School is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for individual children and the whole school. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

This policy is intended to guide, assist and empower the school to meet its responsibilities and to provide an agreed framework within which consistent practices and procedures can be applied. The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils.

### **Responsibilities - School**

The school is responsible for supporting the attendance of all pupils and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance.

The school will:

- work actively to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole as one of its key tasks
- support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed.
- follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality
- provide a safe learning environment
- ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to government legislation and guidance on a daily basis
- encourage good attendance and investigate and follow up all unexplained and unjustified absence
- ensure that the school Attendance Policy is consistently applied and is clearly communicated to all parents, pupils and staff
- liaise with parents so that they are informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record at least once a year, and more often for pupils whose attendance is of concern
- report statistics to the governing body as part of the Head Teacher's termly report
- notify the Local Authority and/or Attendance Improvement Officer of pupils who have poor or patterns of poor attendance, leave school to be educated at home, go missing, or who are excluded.

### **Responsibilities – Parents and Carers**

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents should:

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the Attendance Policy of their children's school
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify their child's school if he/she is absent. This should be done as soon as possible - on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed in writing, when the child returns to school
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- avoid booking holidays during term time
- maintain contact with school staff where necessary

### **Responsibilities – ISL Attendance Team**

The ISL Attendance Teams fulfil the statutory duty of the County Council in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities.

As a maintained school How Wood has a link Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) who will work in close partnership with the school.

In working closely with schools the Attendance Teams will offer the following services:-

### **ATTENDANCE DUTY SYSTEM**

A dedicated telephone line through which schools can contact an AIO between the hours of 9.00 am to 4.30 pm, Monday to Thursday and between the hours of 9.00 am to 3.30 pm on a Friday.

Types of enquiries may include –

- school issues e.g. register coding, holiday absence etc.
- enquiries relating to a pupil
- 10 day absence returns
- request for Early Intervention letters
- FPN enquiries
- Removal from Roll enquiries
- requests for referrals

### **Casework**

Once a case has been accepted, the AIO will undertake direct work with pupils and their parents. This may include:

- arranging meetings between the school, parents and pupils
- making home visits to assess the situation and determine what action needs to be taken
- offering specific support to parents and individual pupils, either at school or elsewhere
- facilitating meetings
- enabling the pupil and parents to access appropriate support from other services and agencies

Attendance Improvement Officers will usually work with children whose absences have not been authorised. However, AIOs may work with children whose absences have been authorised, such as persistent absentee (PA) pupils (see appendix 1).

### **The Use of Legal Action**

If a pupil, who is registered at a school, fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Attendance Improvement Officer and the school fail to secure that pupil's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action. A complaint may be laid against the parents in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or an Education Supervision Order relating to the pupil under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the pupil's absence will be taken into account, when considering legal action. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' will be determined by the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Behaviour and Attendance. If 'exceptional mitigating circumstances' are not deemed to exist then cases which remain open for more than 24 weeks will be referred for legal action. Legal action will, however, be taken earlier when appropriate.

If, after legal action has been taken, the child still fails to attend school regularly the AIO will keep the case open and will, if appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date.

In cases where parents wilfully withhold a pupil from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the ISL Attendance Team will promptly begin legal proceedings on the grounds that no other course of action is available.

### **Attendance Registers**

Registers must be taken at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session.

Registers must record whether each pupil is present; attending an approved educational activity; absent; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.

When calling the register the appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each pupil's name - gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. The school uses the national set of symbols as set out by the DfE.

When the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent correction to the register made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

Entries in manual registers should be written in red or black ink and any correction made in such a manner that the original entry and the correction are both clearly distinguishable (Tippex should not be used).

All schools are required to notify the Local Authority of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason.

A pupil's name may not be deleted from the attendance register unless it has also been deleted from the admissions register. Full details are contained in regulation 8 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended). When a pupil's name is removed from the admissions register the school must notify their local Attendance Team.

A pupil of compulsory school age should have his/her name deleted from the admissions register when:

- the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a School Attendance Order and another school is substituted by the LA for that named in the Order or the Order is revoked
- the pupil has been registered at another school. (Schools can register Traveller children even if they are on the roll of another school. The school the child normally attends is the base school; the other registration is temporary)
- the school has received written notification from the parent that they are educating the pupil themselves (Elective Home Education)
- the pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer lives within a reasonable distance of the school
- in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence, the pupil has failed to attend the school within the 10 school days immediately following the last day of absence which was granted and the school is not satisfied that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause and both the school and the local authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry to locate him/her
- the pupil has been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days, the absence is unauthorised, *and* there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause *and* both the school and the AIO have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate him/her
- the pupil has died
- the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets *and* the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school.
- the pupil has been permanently excluded and the exclusion has been upheld
- the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education and has not on completing such education transferred to a reception class at the school
- the pupil attends a special school and the LA gives consent for his/her name to be removed

If a school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure should establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Confirmation should then be sought from the receiving school. When this information has been obtained, the school should complete form EWN1 and return it to the local Attendance Team office. Whenever a pupil leaves a school a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.

If a school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has "disappeared", the matter should be drawn without delay to the attention of the Children Missing Education Officer.

## **Punctuality and lateness**

How Wood school will actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness should be monitored and followed up.

Nursery	Infants	Juniors
9am to 12pm 12pm – 3pm	8.50am – 12.00pm (registers close at 9.00am) 1.15pm – 3.15pm (registers close at 1.25pm)	8.50am – 12.15pm (registers close at 9.00am) 1.15pm – 3.15pm (registers close at 1.25pm)

- When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she should be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.
- Pupils who arrive outside of the hours above should report to the school office and will be marked in the late book.
- Registers will be marked in accordance with DfE guidance and codes.
- Pupils should not arrive at school before 8.40am. Infants' parents should stay with their child until the whistle is blown.
- When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session using the correct code.
- When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. (Code U)
- When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, his/her presence on site should be noted in a book in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation, etc.
- Punctuality and lateness will be followed up by the school.

## **Authorising Absence**

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation, doubt remains about the explanation offered - or when no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence should be treated as unauthorised.

### **Absence should be authorised if:**

- the pupil is ill
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school and it is known when they intend to return
- there is a close family bereavement
- leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application. (Parents should be reminded that they cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence)
- Absence should be unauthorised if no explanation is forthcoming from the parents or if the school is dissatisfied with the explanation

## **Following up absences**

- If no reason has been provided for a pupil's absence by 9.00am on the first day of absence, the parent of the pupil will be contacted by a member of the office staff no later than 9.30am.
- Early intervention is vitally important if we are to ensure good attendance. Registers are monitored on a regular basis and parents may be contacted to share concerns and to bring about an improvement in attendance.
- Class teachers will notify the Head Teacher if they are concerned about a child's attendance or punctuality.

## **First Day Response**

- How Wood Primary School uses First Day Response for all pupils.
- First Day Response phone calls will be made after 9.00am.
- First Day Response phone calls will be triggered by a child being absent from school and no explanation being received for the absence.
- First Day Response phone calls will be made by 9.30am.
- The Head Teacher is responsible for deciding whether to authorise absences notified through First Day Response.

## **Leaving and returning to School during School Day**

- Parents must notify school staff in advance if the pupil needs to leave the school site during the school day.
- Parents must sign their child back into school by speaking to a member of the office team on their return.
- The signing in and out record/book will be kept and maintained by the admin team and in the event of fire it will be checked to account for all pupils who are not on site.

## **Rewards**

It is important to remember that the vast majority of children at How Wood arrive on time and attend school regularly. An important part of our Attendance Policy is that this good practice is commended and applauded publicly. In order to do this we:

- Publish class attendance rates on newsletters along with the class who has the best overall attendance for the "Attendance Cup".
- Award certificates to pupils who achieve 100% attendance each term and whole academic year.
- Award certificates for attendance where appropriate. The school determines this on a case by case basis and priority is given to pupils who demonstrate a significant improvement in attendance.
- Award a small prize for any pupil with 100% attendance for the whole year.

## **Requests for Family Holidays During Term time**

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations which came into effect on 1st September 2013 removes all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. The amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

How Wood School will therefore not authorise leave in the term time unless it is for an **exceptional circumstance**. All applications will need to be made on the school application form (Appendix 1), which is available on the school website and from the school office. Applications will need to be made at least 2 weeks in advance of the expected leave and include the reason for the request. The Head Teacher will then make an appointment to meet with the parents to discuss the application. The school will then let the parent know if the leave is authorised or unauthorised.

Each application will be made on an individual basis taking into account:

- current levels of attendance for the child
- the exceptional reasons for the leave
- the timings of the leave, e.g. the beginning of the year, particularly with the new teacher or class, in the build up towards assessment periods

Teachers will not set work for completion when a child is on holiday.

### **Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body and staff every two years. It will be available for all parents on the school website. It will be shared with all parents of children who are new to the school.

## How Wood Primary School Application for Leave of Absence



The 2013 amendments to the 2006 Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations specify that head teachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are “exceptional circumstances”.

This is interpreted as:

“...being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.”

Examples could include:

- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark on a tour of duty
- Bereavement or family crisis
- Significant family event

The merits of each individual request will be evaluated against the exceptional circumstances and details given. This will be supported by the evidence considered by the school. If your child is absent from school because of a holiday which has not been agreed, this will be classified as an unauthorised absence.

Name of Pupil: ..... Class: .....  
Date of leave of absence from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ No. of days \_\_\_\_\_

Please state the reason for the request for leave of absence. Please provide as much detail as possible. Continue on a separate piece of paper if required.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Office use only	Assessment of Information
When is the request for? September is critical for transition. Exams and tests should be avoided.	
Pupil's attendance level is? (Up until Autumn half term use the % figure from the previous year).	
Delete where appropriate	REQUEST APPROVED/REQUEST DENIED
Reason and further information:	