



GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST



WOODVALE
PRIMARY ACADEMY

Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Matthew Reetz	Date: September 2023
Last reviewed on:	31 st August 2023	
Next review due by:	31 st August 2025	

Introduction

Woodvale Primary Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all pupils. In line with our vision of 'Everyone Thriving', we believe it is extremely important for pupils to attend regularly and on time. This will give them the best opportunity to progress, succeed and thrive at school.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent / carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason may result in prosecution.

At Woodvale Primary Academy we

- provide a welcoming and caring environment where all members of the Academy feel secure and valued
- expect students to arrive on time every day
- will support parents in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time
- believe leave of absence should not be taken during term-time. We will not authorise requests for leave of absence during term-time, except in exceptional/ unavoidable circumstances

How to notify the Academy of an absence

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness or unavoidable circumstances, please contact the academy **on each day of absence** by:

- Telephoning the school office via 01604 493771

Please inform us of any planned absence in advance, this includes unavoidable medical appointments during the school day.

To inform us about a planned absence:

- Contact the school office to obtain a leave of absence form. This should be completed prior to any travel or accommodation bookings. The school will then make a decision on each case. As stated above, holidays during term time will not be authorised.

1. Aim

Ensuring all pupils have high attendance is a key priority of the academy. Pupils are entitled to a full time education and we know that pupils with high attendance do better at school than those with high absence rates. We also know that absence can be a sign of other risks in a young person's life.

The aim of this document is to set out how we create and maintain a positive culture that supports and values good attendance. It includes how we:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality
- Follow up absences
- Communicate and work with families to reduce absence
- Monitor absences and analyse patterns of absence
- Work with local partners to support high attendance and reduce absence

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of GAT's Attendance Policy. The Trust policy details the relevant legislation and guidance documents. In particular, this policy carefully follows DfE guidance in this area.

Our work on attendance is linked closely to our approaches to safeguarding and behaviour.

3. How we promote a culture of high expectations in attendance and punctuality

- Set expectations about attendance from the outset – from Nursery onwards
- Explain to parents, carers and pupils why good attendance is important and how it helps pupils to thrive.
- Build good communication and relationships between home and school
- Listen to families carefully to find out why their children are not attending well enough so that we can effectively plan ways to overcome the barriers to better attendance
- Challenge families who do not make sure that their children attend and are on time, but also support as necessary
- Support pupils who have had absences to be reintegrated back into the school environment and learning

4. Our expectations of attendance and punctuality

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55 and will be kept open until 9:25. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:30 for EYFS and 13:05 for Years 1-6 and will be kept open until 13:35.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at a school, they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, this means their child must attend every day 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 academy.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the academy on 01604 493771 to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and any subsequent days of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- 'Be Ready'
- Tell a member of staff about any problem which is making it hard for them to attend school regularly and/or be punctual

Class teachers are responsible for:

- recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the office at 9:05 and 13:10 each day
- making positive links with parents and carers to work together to create a positive school life
- positively promoting good attendance and punctuality within the classroom with regard to the academy's Attendance Policy.

Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/ carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the academy system
- Record electronically reasons for absence on each child's register. Reasons must be specific e.g type of illness (not 'unwell' or 'sick')
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer as appropriate in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Providing regular attendance reports to staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the principal
- Working with the local authority School Attendance Support Service to tackle persistent absence Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Evaluating and monitoring processes
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with local partners to implement bespoke strategies to improve attendance for those children with persistent absence or severe absence

The attendance officer is Jackie Line and can be contacted via jline@woodvaleprimaryacademy.org

The principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the academy
- Monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to the trust
- Monitoring the impact of processes and attendance strategies
- Monitoring the impact of work with local partners to improve attendance in identified cases

- Working with local partners when formal procedures such as parental contracts, supervision orders and penalty notices are required

5. Recording attendance

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will use the DfE codes to detail the attendance and absences.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff via 01604 493771

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the academy may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the academy in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. This can be done by completing a Leave of Absence form which can be obtained from the school office.

Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the academy can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Lateness and punctuality are monitored weekly as part of the Safeguarding Team meeting. Contact will be made with parents where lateness and punctuality is a concern so that any barriers to attending school on time can be identified.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend does not, or stops attending without reason, the academy will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the academy may
 - Send a text message to the parents/carers of any children with unexplained absence at 10:00
 - Carry out a home visit
 - Contact police/social care
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the academy will consider involving an education welfare officer or similar

Reporting to parents/ carers

The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through termly attendance reports.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an unavoidable one off event. Examples may include but are not limited to:-

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence/abuse
- Weddings of parents or siblings
- Serious illness of a close relative
- Participation in out of school events at a competition level and operating at a high level of achievement in arts, sport, music etc...

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, **at least 2 weeks before the absence**, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, available from the school office. Evidence may be required to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Holidays should not be taken during term time due to lower cost or parental work commitments as they damage progress and continuity of learning. We will not authorise any holidays, unless in very exceptional circumstances.

Legal sanctions

Where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful or not appropriate (such as an unauthorised holiday in term time), the local authority can take forward legal intervention to formalise support and / or enforce attendance. This includes fines or a penalty notice. The arrangements for these procedures are found via [this link](#).

7. How we monitor attendance

Monitoring attendance

The academy will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the academy and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term by the trust and DfE and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The academy will compare attendance data to the trust and national average.

Analysing attendance

The academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and academy leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, at risk of or persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance such as
 - Families offered support through the Early Help Assessment process
 - The drawing up of a parental contract to include specific strategies for improving attendance and punctuality
 - Involve the local authority School Attendance Support Service

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the trust or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the academy's Education Director.