

# Wood End First School



## *Attendance Policy*

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# WOOD END FIRST SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy

### 1. Aims

Wood End First School sees regular school attendance as essential for all children if they are to be successful. We aim to work in close partnership with parents to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance.

Wood End aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### 3. School Procedures

#### 3.1. Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every child is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry.
- The amended entry.
- The reason for the amendment.
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

(See Appendix 8 for the DfE attendance codes.) Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Children must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm.

### **3.2. Unplanned Absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also Section 6).

Parents should call the school office to report their child's absence. If parents do not contact us and the school is concerned for the whereabouts of that child, the school's Deputy Safeguarding Leads may make a home visit.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt or if the child's attendance has dropped below 90% without reasonable explanation, the school may ask parents 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 school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### **3.3. Medical or Dental Appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

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

Parents should inform the school office about any medical or dental appointments and provide evidence of the appointment in the form of a letter or appointment card, or show school office staff a text message. Wherever possible, a copy will be taken for the child's school file.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in Section 4.

### **3.4. Lateness and Punctuality**

A child who arrives late but before the register has closed (8.56–9.29am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L).

A child who arrives after the register has closed (after 9.30am) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U).

If a child is persistently late, a letter will be sent to the parents of that child and a meeting will be requested so that a support plan can be put in place to improve punctuality (see Appendix 2).

### **3.5. Following Up Absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

- If a child is absent without an explanation being received, the school administrator will contact the parents by phone, wherever possible, on the first day of absence. If the school feels the absence is going on longer than we would expect, the school will call again.
- If parents do not contact us and the school is concerned for the whereabouts of that child, the school's Deputy Safeguarding Leads may make a home visit. If there is no answer at the home, we would leave a note to advise parents we had called (see Appendix 3).
- If the child is persistently absent for any reason, the Headteacher will write to the parents and invite them to attend a meeting at school (see Appendix 4).
- If a child returns to school after a period of absence and the parent fails to provide a verbal explanation or note, the school administrator will send a letter to parents asking for the reason for the absence. If the subsequent reply is satisfactory, the absence will be authorised. If the reply is unsatisfactory or not received, the absence will be unauthorised (see Appendix 5).
- If a child is persistently absent (or late) and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the parents will be invited to attend an Attendance Support Meeting.
- If a child has an unacceptable level of absence due to sickness, the school will issue a record form to be stamped at the doctor's surgery. That child's sickness absence will only be authorised if the child has attended the surgery on the first day of absence, where reasonably possible, and the form has been stamped (see Appendix 6).

- Notes from parents will be kept in the child's record folder. All telephone messages are recorded in SIMS for the class teacher to review and also on a spreadsheet which allows reporting on all absences.

### **3.6. Reporting to Parents**

Attendance figures will be reported to parents annually on their child's end-of-year report.

If a child's attendance falls below 95% parents will receive an initial letter detailing their child's attendance figure and offering support to the parents to improve this.

If a child's attendance drops below 90% parents will receive an additional letter again detailing their child's attendance figure and offering support, but advising that absence will no longer be authorised without a stamp from a GP or under the discretion of the Headteacher.

## **4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

### **4.1. Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence**

Term times are for education: this is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. At Wood End we prioritise attendance. The default school policy of Wood End is that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as requests that are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

The school considers each application for term time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. The child's previous attendance record will be taken into account. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. Parents must complete a form requesting leave of absence (see Appendix 7).

Valid reasons for authorised absence may include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in Sections 3.2 and 3.3.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. Only one day will be authorised.
- 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 school, but it is not known whether the child is attending educational provision.
- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.



- Families may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.
- Absences to visit family members are not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives.
- The school will make reasonable adjustments for children with special educational needs or disabilities.

These examples are not exhaustive.

#### **4.2. Legal Sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay **£60 within 21 days** or **£120 within 28 days**. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the Local Authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice. (See Appendix 8 – Local Authority Guidance: Fixed Penalty Notices FAQs.)

#### **5. Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

- Wood End will offer an environment in which children feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos must demonstrate that children feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow-up action will be taken.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all children. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to children's needs.
- Attendance data will be monitored regularly and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support and inform policy/practice.
- Each half term, children with attendance of 95% and above will receive certificates presented during assembly. Children who achieve 100% for the year will be presented with a certificate of achievement and a prize at the end of the school year.
- Children who have 100% for the half term will be invited to attend a tea party with the Headteacher.
- Children who have achieved 95% attendance and above will have their names included in the newsletter.

- Each week the class with 'top attendance' will be awarded the 'Attendance Bear' during Monday morning assembly.
- Other strategies may be employed throughout the year to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Children whose attendance or lateness is a cause for concern are monitored at monthly meetings between the school administrator and the Headteacher in order to identify how best to support those children who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, Structured Conversations, etc) of the importance of regular attendance and the half term's attendance will be reported.
- Children who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will, on agreement with the school, have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return. A medical certificate will be required for long periods of illness.
- The Headteacher will report regularly to the Governing Body on attendance matters.
- The Headteacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other services and agencies when this may serve to support and assist children who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Where necessary, parenting orders and/or fixed penalty notices will be used to deter persistent offenders.
- A Parent Guide giving advice to parents regarding attendance and punctuality has been published by the school, this is available in hard copy or on the school's website (see Appendix 9).

## **6. Attendance Monitoring**

The Headteacher monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. The school administrator will send a daily absence/lates report to the Headteacher each morning.

The school office holds a list of children whose attendance is below 90%. All absences must be checked with the Headteacher before an absence can be recorded as authorised.

The school office will record any conversations with parents on to SIMS for the class teacher to review and also so that the records can be accessed at any time when reviewing a child's attendance.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see Section 3.2).

If a child's absence goes above the expected number of days we would expect them to be off due to their reported illness, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a child's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving the Local Authority for advice and intervention.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a child's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the child will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and Local Authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with Governors.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **7.1. The Governing Board**

The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **7.2. The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3. Office Staff**

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record them on SIMS.

Office staff should send a daily report to the Headteacher detailing any lates or absences. When the Headteacher is not in school, the list should be sent to the Deputy Head as well.

Office staff should monitor the <90% attendance list and confirm with the Headteacher (or the Deputy Head in the absence of the Headteacher) whether an absence for these children can be authorised.

## **8. Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Governing Board.

## **9. Links with Other Policies**

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.

**Implemented:** February 2018

**Review date:** As necessary



# Wood End First School



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Headteacher: Claire Wilson B.A. Hons.



## REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Under changes to the law from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, no term time absence can be approved by the Headteacher unless under exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances will not be holidays, birthdays, etc. (Please see our Attendance Policy or Parent Guide for further clarification.)

If you feel that there is an exceptional reason for requiring time away from school for your child, you must complete this form in full. 'Exceptional' means requests that are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

This form must be completed in detail to allow a fair judgement to be made on the request. Once processed, this form will be returned to inform you of the decision in writing.

In assessing the request, both the nature of the circumstances and your child's attendance levels, current and over time, will be taken into account.

By signing this leave request, I understand the following:

1. The Headteacher has a **discretionary** power to authorise the leave under exceptional circumstances, it is not a right.
2. Only the Headteacher can grant leave of absence.
3. The school may authorise all or part of the leave of absence requested.
4. If leave is granted and my/our child does not return to the school within the time allowed, the school may, in consultation with the local authority, remove him/her from the register. This would necessitate me/us applying for our child to be re-admitted to a school.
5. If the absence is not authorised and I/we still take our child out of school, I understand that I/we may be the subject of a Fixed Penalty Fine in respect of each child and each parent, or subject to further legal proceedings.
6. If we are delayed in returning, we will contact the school to explain why as soon as is possible.
7. That the notional allowance previously of 10 school days for family holiday has been removed by law and no longer exists as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.
8. That I will undertake not to make any bookings or arrangements for the absence until authorisation has been provided by the Headteacher.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Parent/Carer) \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Please complete the absence request overleaf.*

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME  
DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

I/we request that my child be granted leave of absence

from (date) \_\_\_\_\_ to (date) \_\_\_\_\_

(Please include the first and last school day of the absence.)

This is a total of \_\_\_\_\_ school days absence from school.

Please give full details for the reason for the leave of absence request. Failure to provide full details may result in a decision being taken not to authorise the absence due to lack of information.

The request is in respect of the following:

I certify that this is a request for leave in exceptional circumstances and that all information provided on this form is true and factual. I understand that any fraudulent request could affect future requests and further action could be taken.

**School use only:**

<b>Complete absence granted</b>	
<b>Partial absence granted</b>	
<b>Absence not authorised by the school</b>	
<b>Absence entered on Attendance System</b>	
<b>Child's current attendance level</b>	
<b>Reason for non-authorisation/partial authorisation (where applicable)</b>	

See O:\WPDOCS\Attendance\Leave of Absence Request 2018.docx



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[www.woodend.org.uk](http://www.woodend.org.uk)

Headteacher: Claire Wilson B.A. Hons.



Read Write inc.



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

I am writing to you as your child is persistently late for school. At Wood End we expect children to attend school on time every day. When children arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher – everyone's education is compromised.

This school year, your child has been late on \_\_\_\_\_ occasions and missed \_\_\_\_\_ minutes of education.

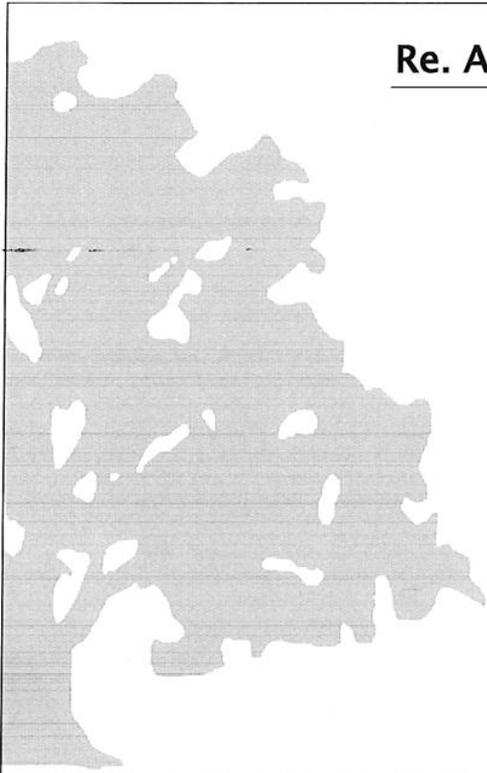
I need to inform you that attendance is monitored by Milton Keynes Local Authority and any further lateness may result in you being served with a Penalty Notice or a summons to court. Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Obviously we do not want this to happen, if you require support from us to improve your child's punctuality please do not hesitate to get in touch. We are able to offer you appointments with the school nurse for advice and our Family Support worker Mrs Hall would be more than happy to discuss any other issues you may be having.

Yours sincerely,

Claire Wilson  
Headteacher

**Re. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL- School Copy**



Today at \_\_\_\_\_  
we visited, as we are concerned that

\_\_\_\_\_ is not at school and we are unable to contact you on your phone.

**Please telephone the school office.**

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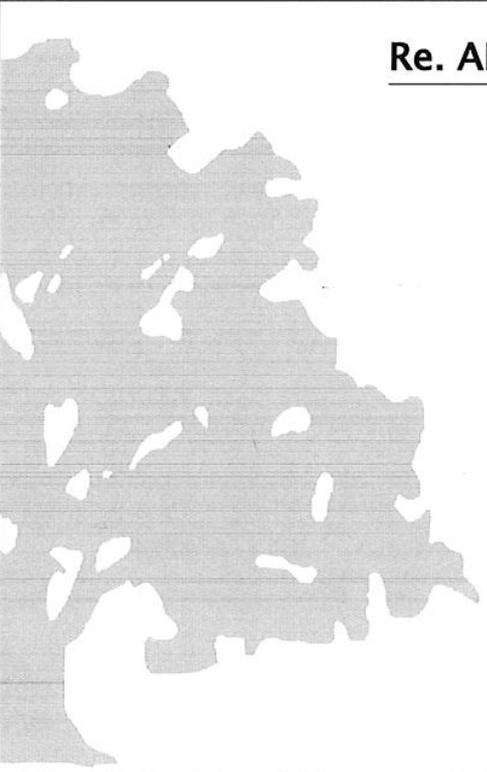


'Nurturing little acorns into sturdy oaks.'



O:\WPDOCS\LETTERS TO PARENTS\Attendance\absence slip for visits to home.pub

**Re. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL- Parent Copy**



Today at \_\_\_\_\_  
we visited, as we are concerned that

\_\_\_\_\_ is not at school and we are unable to contact you on your phone.

**Please telephone the school office.**

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Read Write inc.



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

I am writing to you because your child's attendance has dropped below our school target of **96%** and we would like to support you to raise this figure.

At Wood End we expect children to attend school every day. Obviously we understand that there may be some exceptional circumstances when a child cannot attend school but we request that parents to do their utmost to ensure their child is in school every day. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will help your child later on in life and it also ensures they do not fall behind their peers.

Your child's attendance is currently \_\_\_\_\_% .

We would like to work with our families and if you require support from us to improve your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We are able to offer you appointments with the school nurse for advice on health and our Family Support worker Mrs Hall would be more than happy to discuss any other issues you may be having.

Yours sincerely,

Claire Wilson  
Headteacher



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Headteacher: Claire Wilson B.A. Hons.



Read Write inc.



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

I am writing to you as your child's attendance has dropped below our acceptable level. At Wood End we expect children to attend school every day. Obviously we understand that there may be the odd exceptional reason that a child cannot attend school but we request parents to do their utmost to ensure their child is in school every day. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will help your child later on in life. Children who have a poor school attendance record may have less chance of securing a job when they are adults.

As your child's attendance is at \_\_\_\_\_ %, we would now require you to have a stamped letter by your GP surgery to verify that your child is unwell. If you are unable to provide us with this then unfortunately your child's absence will not be authorised.

I need to inform you that if your child has unauthorised absence of 5 days or more you are at risk of being fined by Milton Keynes Local Authority. Obviously we do not want this to happen, if you require support from us to improve your child's attendance please do not hesitate to get in touch. We are able to offer you appointments with the school nurse for advice on health and our Family Support worker Mrs Hall would be more than happy to discuss any other issues you may be having.

Please find attached a copy of the GP stamp letter in case you require it for any future absence.

Yours sincerely,

Claire Wilson  
Headteacher



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2018

To the GP surgery,

I am supporting \_\_\_\_\_ and his/her family with school attendance matters.  
I would appreciate it if you could confirm by stamp whenever this child attends surgery to see a GP or nurse.

Thank you,

Claire Wilson  
Headteacher

-----  
I can confirm that the above named child attended the Surgery/Hospital to see the GP/Nurse.  
Surgery Stamp: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
I can confirm that the above named child attended the Surgery/Hospital to see the GP/Nurse.  
Surgery Stamp: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
I can confirm that the above named child attended the Surgery/Hospital to see the GP/Nurse.  
Surgery Stamp: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
I can confirm that the above named child attended the Surgery/Hospital to see the GP/Nurse.  
Surgery Stamp: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
I can confirm that the above named child attended the Surgery/Hospital to see the GP/Nurse.  
Surgery Stamp: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
I \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian) give my permission for the GP/Nurse to confirm  
that I visited the surgery with \_\_\_\_\_ (child) on the above dates.

**Please be advised that this is a legal document and may be  
produced in a Court of Law as evidence.**

See O:\WPDOCS\Attendance\letter – absence GP stamp.docx