



**METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF CALDERDALE**  
**Woodhouse Primary School**  
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**MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTATION**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

	Date	Chair of Governors	Headteacher
Adopted	January 2003		
Reviewed	April 2006		
Reviewed	January 2010		
Reviewed			
Reviewed			

# WOODHOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTATION ATTENDANCE - POLICY into PRACTICE – JANUARY 2010

### 1. Introduction

The development of a clear and consistent whole school attendance policy, along with the implementation of effective and efficient administrative procedures, supported by constructive dialogue between staff and parents can do much to improve pupil attendance.

### 2. Rationale

High attendance at school is important. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Child protection as well as educational concerns must be considered alongside school attendance. Poor attendance not only hinders educational progress but may place some children in an environment where they are at risk. It is therefore important that we strive to achieve high levels of attendance for all our pupils.

### 3. Aims of the Attendance Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework of guidance which will raise and maintain an appropriate level of attendance for all our pupils.

Through this policy the school aims to:-

- Comply with regulations regarding accurately and consistently recording attendance and punctuality in school registers;
- Support and encourage parents to fulfil their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly;
- Foster a good working relationship with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to help him/her support families in meeting their legal requirements on attendance;
- Continue to provide a welcoming and secure environment where children feel valued and are keen to make progress in all aspects of school life.

The school will endeavour to fulfil these aims via the following procedures which have been made in consultation with the school's EWO and agreed by the staff and governors.

### 4. Guidelines

Parents are made aware of these procedures through induction meetings, newsletter and individual discussions. Some aspects also appear in the school's prospectus.

#### 4.1 The School Day

Session times are-

<b>Infants</b>	<b>Juniors</b>
8.55am – 12.15pm	8.55am – 12.25pm
1.15pm – 3.10pm	1.15pm – 3.15pm

The doors are opened from 8.50am to enable children to be ready for a prompt 8.55am start to the school day.

#### 4.2 School term dates.

The school follows the term time pattern set by Calderdale Local Authority and the Governing Body also agrees on the five pupil closure dates to provide time for staff training. Parents are informed of these dates through newsletters, website and school prospectus.

### **4.3 Holiday in Term Time – A Parents’ Guide**

This leaflet is produced by Calderdale Local Authority and is made available to parents through the School Office. The leaflet includes:-

#### **4.3.1 What should parents consider?**

Before taking your child out of school during term time, it is essential you give careful consideration to possible consequences.

Children out of school for holidays may miss significant learning opportunities. This affects subsequent understanding of the subject and the ability to progress and participate in the future. In some cases such absence disrupts friendship patterns with classmates and peers and thus leaves pupils feeling isolated and vulnerable on their return.

Pupils who have various forms of special needs provision may find extended periods of absence particularly disruptive to future learning and the re-establishment of a stable and consistent learning regime.

#### **4.3.2 The legal position**

Attendance targets for each academic year are set by the Governing Body in consultation with the Head, in the first meeting of the year.

Parents of children who are registered pupils at a school have a legal duty to ensure they attend regularly. The Government has issued guidance to Headteachers, which indicates that they should only grant leave of absence for holidays in exceptional cases.

The law requires that school staff consider the academic and educational needs of the child before agreeing to such requests. If it appears that the proposed absence will have implications for the child’s future learning, permission cannot be granted.

If parents take holidays in term time without prior permission, Headteachers are instructed to mark absence as unauthorised in school registers and pupil records. Such absence may render parents liable to prosecution.

In exceptional circumstances permission for holidays may be granted for a limited period. If a pupil fails to return on the agreed date, they can be removed from the school roll.

#### **4.3.3 The responsibilities of the Headteacher**

Before granting leave of absence the Headteacher must consider the effect on the child’s learning and educational progress.

The decision will be influenced by:-

- The child’s age
- The duration of leave
- The child’s educational ability and attainment
- The educational outcomes and consequences.

### **4.4 Term time absence requests due to holidays or special circumstances**

Parents who wish their child to take time out of school during term time are required to complete a Request Form (see Appendix 1) with a full explanation of the reasons behind the request.

These requests are considered by the Head, in consultation with the school staff, on the basis of the impact on the academic and educational needs of the child balanced with the reasons for the requested absence provided by the parents.

Holiday absence is increasing year on year at Woodhouse Primary School. Whilst we appreciate there is a temptation to take children out in term time due to reduced prices, we request that parents think very carefully about the impact the absence may have on their child’s progress and their friendships.

*Parents are reminded that there is no requirement for Headteachers to grant 10 days authorised absence in a school year.*

In light of this, the Head, in discussion with the Governing Body, has agreed that absence at specific times in a child's school life could have a detrimental effect on their progress.

At Woodhouse School, pupils are unlikely to be granted authorised absence:-

- When preparing or engaged in SATs during May for Year 2 to Year 6
- When preparing or engaged in internal school assessments in September or January from Year 1 to Year 6;
- During the first term in Reception;
- Throughout the transition year in Year 6;
- At the start of a term;
- Where a child's attendance is already below 95% for the current or previous year;
- For more than five days in any school year.

In the exceptional circumstances where a holiday absence in term time is granted, parents are encouraged to consider the last one or two days in a term or half-term rather than the start or middle of a term.

#### **4.5 School Attendance Registers**

School registers are important legal documents and must be completed carefully and accurately. Class registration time, therefore, needs to be a quiet responding session. Once marked, the registers should be sent to the school office in case they are needed to check attendance if the school has to be evacuated.

The registers must be kept tidy. The EWO will check them regularly. The teacher/teaching assistant completes boxes at the foot of each page. The Senior Learning Mentor completes weekly totals on the page at the end of term. Weekly attendance percentages are calculated on a regular basis and reported to governors through the Headteacher's termly reports.

**Morning Registration** - begins 8.55 am and ends by 9.05 am.

**Afternoon Registration** - begins at 1.15pm and ends by 1.25pm.

- \* Children who are present at the time of registration are given an attendance mark in black / \
- \* Children who are not present by 9.00am are given an absence mark in red **O**
- \* Children who arrive after 9.00 are given a late mark **L** (L marked in black in red circle)
- \* Registers are sent to the office at the end of morning & afternoon registration.
- \* Staff complete dinner registers and total number of dinners & sandwiches.
- \* Parents are asked to inform the school if their child is to be absent. Telephone messages and e-mail notes regarding absence need to be kept in the zippy wallet along with any letters sent by parents. These are disposed of at the end of each half-term.
- \* Authorised absences are filled in the register in black if staff have been informed of the reason.

**M** – Medical appointment    **I** – Illness    **H** – Authorised family holiday    **G** – Unauthorised holiday

**R** - Religious observance    **C** – Authorised other circumstances    **O** – Unauthorised (non-holiday)

Unauthorised family holiday absence, or holidays taken without prior authorisation, are marked **G**

- \* A register of Late Arrivals & Early Departures is kept in the school office.

#### **4.5 Absence due to illness**

Whilst the school is aiming to improve attendance levels, it is common sense not to encourage attendance if a pupil has a sickness bug or untreated head lice as we are simply spreading the problem amongst ourselves, and thus cause more absence.

#### **4.6 Follow up procedure for absences**

On the child's return to school, parents who have not informed the school of the reason for their child's absence will be asked to complete an Absence Form. This absence becomes an authorised absence if the reason is a satisfactory explanation eg illness, medical appointment.

Parents will be reminded regularly to inform the school on the child's first day of absence. If the reason given is an unsatisfactory explanation, e.g. went shopping, the Headteacher will discuss the problem with the parent. The absence will remain as unauthorised if the Heateacher believes that the reason for the absence is unacceptable.

#### **4.7 Monitoring attendance and punctuality**

Staff are asked to inform the Headteacher if a child's attendance or punctuality is causing concern. The Senior Learning Mentor calculates weekly attendance percentages figures for each class.

The percentage figures per term are compiled for individual pupils. The Headteacher and School Administrator evaluate the attendance of pupils below 90% and a letter is sent to parents where there are concerns over the attendance pattern.

At the start of each new term the Headteacher provides parents with an analysis of attendance for each year group.

Staff are asked to encourage all children to arrive at school on time. Persistent lateness will be monitored. Staff will discuss the problem directly with the parent in the first instance. If the problem persists the Headteacher will become involved in the discussions.

#### **4.8 EWO Referral**

The Headteacher will inform the EWO if a child of statutory school age has less than 85% attendance in any one term. Discussions with the EWO will determine whether a home visit is needed.

#### **4.9 Long term authorised absence**

If a child is going to be absent for a length of time, parents often ask if their child can have some school work to do at home. In general, only additional reading books or library books are made available. If a child is absent through illness, they are often too ill to value any work they are asked to complete. However, the individual requirements of each case will be considered by the class teacher in consultation with the Headteacher.

#### **4.10 Rewards for improved attendance**

The school acknowledges that for some children 100% attendance could never be achieved due to circumstances outside their control. It is therefore important to acknowledge all efforts made to improve. Reminders about the need for punctuality and good attendance are regularly given at registration or through school newsletters. Praise and encouragement will be given to all who make improvements and maintain a good level of attendance and punctuality. Pupils are presented with attendance certificates for 100% attendance for the term and for the year. A certificate is presented weekly in assembly to the class with the highest attendance.

### **5. Evaluation**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by school staff and the EWO. Governors will be kept informed. Attendance data will continue to be collated by the School Administrator termly and reported to Governors through the Headteacher's reports. The EWO will continue to make regular visits to the school to discuss attendance concerns and policy details.

## **6. Success Criteria**

Criteria for success will include:-

- Attaining or exceeding the Attendance targets for the year
- The accuracy and consistency of registers completed by staff
- Improvements made in punctuality and attendance % figures for all pupils, especially those causing concern.
- Parents increased awareness of the importance of school attendance, and the need to avoid taking family holidays in term time.
- Parents following the school's set procedures for notifying absences
- Continued good relationships between staff, EWO and parents

## **7. Inclusion**

The school is committed to an effective approach to inclusion. The three principles for inclusion are:-

- ✓ Setting suitable learning challenges
- ✓ Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
- ✓ Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils

It is important to develop a shared understanding that a commitment to education inclusion must take account of the needs of all children who are vulnerable to marginalisation within, or exclusion from, the school community.

## **8. Health and Safety**

Child protection as well as educational concerns must be considered alongside school attendance. Poor attendance not only hinders educational progress but may place some children in an environment where they are at risk.

## **9. Other documentation which supports this policy**

- Child Protection Policy
- Evaluation and Monitoring Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Inclusion Policy

## **10. Review**

The policy will be reviewed within a three year cycle or earlier if deemed necessary.



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**Headteacher: Mrs Lynn Daveney**

**Deputy Headteacher: Mr Michael Seager**

## GUIDANCE FOR AUTHORISING ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Dear Parents

The Headteacher and the Governing Body ask that you read this guidance before completing the attached Request Form.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. However, from time to time occasions may arise where parents wish to request absence during term time. The Headteacher has to consider the reasons for the request, the effect on the continuity of the child's learning, and his/her overall attendance.

Holiday absence is increasing year on year at Woodhouse Primary School. Whilst we appreciate there is a temptation to take children out in term time due to reduced prices, we request that parents think very carefully about the impact the absence may have on their child's progress and their friendships.

In light of this, the Headteacher, in discussion with the Governing Body, has agreed that absence at specific times in a child's school life could have a detrimental effect on their progress.

At Woodhouse Primary School, pupils are unlikely to be granted authorised absence:-

- When preparing or engaged in SATs during May for pupils in Year 2 to Year 6
- When preparing or engaged in internal school assessments in September or January from Year 1 to Year 6;
- During the first term in Reception;
- In the first nine months of Year 6;
- At the start of any half-term with the exception of Summer 2 for Y6 ;
- Where a child's attendance is already below 95% for the current or previous year;
- For more than five days in any school year.

In circumstances where a holiday absence in term time is granted, parents are encouraged to consider the last one or two days in a term or half-term rather than the start or middle of a term.

### **Holiday in Term Time – A Parents' Guide**

This leaflet is produced by Calderdale Local Authority and is made available to parents through the School Office. The school's Attendance Policy can be found on the school's Web Site.

The application should be made **well in advance** and parents are strongly advised to apply for leave of absence **before** they confirm their holiday arrangements. Under no circumstances will absences for family holiday in term time be authorised after they have happened.

The Headteacher will notify you of the decision within five days of receipt of the form.

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**REQUEST FORM FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE IN TERM TIME**

**To: Mrs Stoker - Headteacher, Woodhouse Primary School**

Child's name ..... Class .....

**I wish to apply for leave of absence for my child**

Dates for which leave of absence is requested:

From:..... To: ..... Number of school days:.....  
(first day of absence) (last day of absence)

Have you previously had leave of absence for this child in this school year? YES/NO

(If YES, please give dates:  
.....)

Please give the reasons for your request.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date: ..... Signed by Parent: .....

***For school use only***

Leave of absence approved

Leave of absence not approved

.....  
.....

Date..... Signed by Head: .....