



PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY



Wood Bank School

From strong roots we grow and blossom

Policy Ratified	September 2024
Review Date	September 2026
Signed (Headteacher)	
Signed (Chair of Governors)	

Philosophy

Here at Wood Bank we are a dedicated staff team who strive to ensure all our pupil's learn and achieve to the best of their ability. Our aim is to work holistically and in partnership with families to support them in ensuring their children are happy and thrive at school and at home.

Procedures/Practice

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Education Act 1996 requires:

- Parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- Schools are responsible for recording pupil's attendance twice a day
- An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the School's admission register.
- Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence.

PARENTS/CARERS REQUIREMENTS

- Ensure that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly
- **Phone the school office before 9.30am on the first day of absence to report the reason**
- Keep requests for their child to be absent for any reason to a minimum
- Ensure that their child returns to school following a medical appointment whenever possible
- Apply to the Head Teacher for any leave of absence that falls outside the normal authorised absences
- Contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school

SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

- Promote pupils' learning and achievements
- School to publish its attendance figures to parents and to promote attendance e.g on the Newsletter
- Increase levels of attendance throughout the school
- Meet the legal requirements set out by the Government policy
- Promote a positive attitude to attendance and punctuality
- Reward good attendance and improved attendance
- Consistently record authorised and unauthorised absence
- Monitor and challenge extended or repeated patterns of absence
- Contact Educational Welfare Officer or Social Services as appropriate
- In the case of long term, absence due to accident or illness, to provide an appropriate educational programme that may be delivered in the home setting

AIM

- Government guidelines state that 95% attendance is average attendance for a primary school aged pupil
- As a school we accept 90% to be our attendance aim due to the complex needs of our pupils
- As a Special Needs School we take into account and accommodate for the wide range of all our pupil's conditions and medical needs, as this can legitimately impact on attendance rates.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

An Authorised Absence is when school have accepted the reasons for absence as legitimate and there are no grounds for the local authority to consider the appropriateness of prosecution.

Absences can only be authorised by the school when permission has been given in advance for a pupil to be absent or an explanation for absence has been accepted afterwards.

Acceptable reasons for absence include:

- Illness
- Illness with a risk to others e.g. infection
- Sent home from school due to illness
- Exceptional family circumstance e.g. bereavement
- Medical/dental appointments which cannot be made out of school time
- Taking part in special tuition outside of the school
- Religious observance
- Exclusion

Notice of request for leave needs to be handed to the Head Teacher at least 4 weeks before. Request forms are available from the school office.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Unauthorised Absence is '**unacceptable reasons in which the school cannot approve pupil leave**'

Unacceptable reasons for absence include:

- The explanation provided by parent/carer is deemed insufficient
- Unexplained absence
- Truancy
- Shopping
- Visiting friends or relatives
- Holidays
- A persistent/ recurring illness where medical advice has not been sought

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

- 2006 regulations remove reference to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. In light of these changes we are unable to authorise absence for holidays taken in term time apart from in exceptional circumstances. This has to be discussed and approved by the Head Teacher, who may seek further advice from the schools Education Welfare Officer.
- If Parents remove their child for unauthorised leave the Head Teacher may ask the Education Welfare Service to issue a penalty notice, under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, which carries a fine of £50 to £100 per parent, per child. Non payment of the penalty notice could result in prosecution

EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICE

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) works to support all schools to reduce persistent and unauthorised absentee levels in accordance with DFE expectations and thresholds. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the Local Authority and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers; it may take legal action if parents fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly and there is no legitimate reason for the absence (under section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

The action might take one of two forms:

- The issuing of a Penalty Notice (a fine, issued by Calderdale EWS, for a child's unauthorised absence from school) the cost of the penalty is £120 - if paid within 21 days it is reduced to £60.
- Prosecution in the local Magistrates Court. The court fine the parents and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), as Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

We understand that our Pupils may have appointments within school hours. Where possible we would advise for parents/carers to try and arrange for a time outside of the school hours to ensure your child isn't missing valuable learning time.

If it's unavoidable to attend a medical appointment within school hours, we advise trying to get an am or pm appointment where your child can still attend half a day of school so they are not missing out on a full day of learning.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Occasionally Exceptional Circumstances can result in absence this includes:

- Close Family bereavement
- Extended periods in hospital
- Unforeseen change to family circumstances due to an emergency
- Religious celebrations that may fall outside of the term time period
- School closed due to unavoidable cause or circumstance
- Transport provided by the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not in walking distance.
- Extreme Weather conditions make it unsafe for children to get into school

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

School treats absence due to religious observance (outside of schools normal school holidays) as an authorised absence. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the family belong. Where necessary schools may seek advice from the family's religious body to confirm the dates.

Responsibilities for Leading, Monitoring & Evaluating

- Our Family Intervention Leads are responsible for monitoring Pupil Attendance across the school, instigating appropriate interventions and reporting back to the Senior Leadership Team and Governors. Referrals to the Education Welfare Service will be made by the Headteacher.

The Attendance Monitoring Process:

Weekly Procedure

1. Registers completed by Class Teachers every morning and afternoon.
2. Calderdale First Day Calling Procedure used for any pupil absences.
3. Home-Visits undertaken if we are unable to make contact with families following several attempts via text/ telephone.

Termly Procedure

1. Update whole school attendance summary graph using data from SIMS
2. Update Analysis of Absence Types graph using data from SIMS
3. Update the attendance figures for each pupil using data from SIMS
4. Identify those pupils whose attendance figure falls below 90%
5. Family Intervention Lead to review each identified pupil, to determine the most appropriate course of action
6. All identified actions to be undertaken by the Family Intervention Lead and reviewed at the next termly meeting for impact.

If a child's attendance were to drop below 90% over the course of a week, the following actions would be undertaken:

Stage One

In consultation with the Class Teacher and the Senior Leadership team, the pupil's persistent absence would be reviewed and a decision made as to whether this was an explicable absence. If not:

Stage Two

A letter would be sent to parents, informing them of the school's obligation and notifying them that their child's attendance was being monitored for improvement

Stage Three

Failure to improve would oblige the school to offer a face-to-face meeting, with a reiteration of the parent's duty to their child and to offer school support in meeting this.

Stage Four

After persistent lack of improvement, the Family Intervention Lead would contact the Education Welfare Service to report the parent.

Related Legislation/Documentation/Policies

This policy relates to the following:

- School Attendance (2016)