



WOODHALL SCHOOL



www.woodhall.herts.sch.uk

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Tuesday 3rd May 2022

Updated Attendance Policy

We have strict attendance procedures to ensure our learners are healthy, safe and have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. If your child's attendance falls below 96%, they are missing significant portions of their learning which can have a detrimental and long lasting effects on them. The gov.uk website states: *"Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school."*

We must work together to ensure our children have every opportunity to learn, socialise and thrive and that starts with good attendance. We understand that sometimes, absence cannot be helped but should be kept to a minimum.

Outlined below are some helpful terms that you might find useful when discussing attendance, guidance on actions you may take in different scenarios and answers to some frequently asked questions.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can reach us at our new attendance email address:

attendance@woodhall.herts.sch.uk.

Kind Regards,

Mrs Cooper Battersby
Assistant Headteacher,
Woodhall School

Helpful Terms

Here are some definitions that you may find helpful when discussing attendance:

Poor Attendance	Less than 96% Attendance
Persistent Absence	Less than 90% Attendance
Good Attendance	Attendance is 96% or above
Authorised absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The reasons you have given for your child's absence have been accepted by the school. - We will often ask for evidence to authorise absence.
Unauthorised absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When the school does not accept the reason that has been given or agree with the amount of time taken, we will not authorise the absence. - If your child is Persistently Absent, we will rarely authorise absence without evidentiary support (i.e. a doctor's letter, the school have sent the child home
Compulsory School Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your child must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first. If your child's fifth birthday is on one of those dates then they reach compulsory school age on that date.
Local Authority Attendance Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School work closely with the Local Authority Attendance Team, providing support and helping to ensure that parents comply with their legal duty to make sure all compulsory school-aged children have good attendance. - Schools have to regularly inform the Local Authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from school, have irregular attendance, or have missed 10 school days or more without the school's permission.
Penalty Notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School has the ability to consider penalty notices as a consequence if a child's attendance is of concern and absences are not authorised. Any action school take is because your child and their attendance is important to us. - FIXED PENALTY NOTICES A penalty notice will be issued with regard to unauthorised absence if a pupil fails to attend school as required without a genuine explanation. A pupil's absence must have been unauthorised for at least 15 sessions (one session is half day either am or pm) in the previous and/or current term. Penalty notices will involve a parent paying a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days. <p>Failure to pay the fine within 28 days will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdrawal of the notice (limited circumstances apply). Prosecution will be taken by the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996, section 444.</p> <p>The issuing of penalty notices will comply with the code of conduct and practice as determined by the Local Authority</p>

Scenario	Steps to take...	Return to School...
<p>My child has sickness or diarrhoea.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="427 170 911 210">1. <u>Keep your child at home.</u> <li data-bbox="427 259 911 327">2. On <u>each day of absence</u>, notify the <u>School Office via email</u> on: attendance@woodhall.herts.sch.uk The School Office is very busy and it is not always possible to answer the phone or pick up messages quickly. We advise you contact the School Office by email rather than on the phone. 	<p>If a child vomits or has diarrhoea, parents <u>should keep them off school for a period of 24 hours.</u></p> <p>Parents should use this time to monitor them carefully. If they think they have been sick for reasons such as over-eating, coughing (non-Covid related) over-exertion, a reaction to something etc. then they should bring them back to school the next day or as soon as they feel well enough.</p> <p>Many children complain of a stomach-ache or headache when they feel anxious or worried. If you suspect that your child is feeling worried, rather than sick, please get them into school and speak to the class teacher as soon as possible.</p> <p>If parents have reason to suspect they have been sick or had diarrhoea <u>due to a virus or bug</u>, they should keep the child off for <u>48 hours from the last episode of sickness or diarrhoea.</u></p>
<p>My child feels unwell (not with symptoms related to Covid-19) or has a small injury. I am not sure if they should be in school or not.</p>	<p>This helpful NHS Link can help you decide whether your child should be in school or not: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/</p> <p>If your child can eat, watch television or play, they are probably well enough to be in school. Try and get your child to school. Speak to Mrs Fleming, Miss Lake or the class teacher. They can help you decide if your child should be in or not.</p> <p>With your permission, a First-Aider can administer appropriate medication and we will contact you if your child is not well enough to be in school.</p>	
<p>My child is too unwell to be in school (not with symptoms related to Covid-19 or diarrhoea or sickness)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="427 1104 911 1144">1. <u>Keep your child at home.</u> <li data-bbox="427 1193 911 1261">2. On <u>each day of absence</u>, notify the <u>School Office via email</u> on: attendance@woodhall.herts.sch.uk 	<p>If your child is too unwell to attend school, please keep them at home until they feel well enough to return to school.</p>
<p>My child has symptoms or a confirmed case of Covid-19.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="427 1384 911 1424">1. <u>Keep your child at home.</u> <li data-bbox="427 1473 911 1619">2. As Covid-19 guidance changes very quickly, please call the school office for updated advice before sending your child to school. 	<p>If your child has a confirmed case of Covid-19, please keep them at home for three whole days. On the fourth day, they may return to school if they feel well enough and have no high-temperature, sickness or diarrhoea. They may still have a cough.</p> <p>If they have a <u>high-temperature</u>, and any other symptom of Covid-19, please keep them at home for at least three <u>days</u> as a precaution.</p>
<p>My child has a medical or dental appointment during school hours.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="427 1686 911 1843">1. Before the <u>day of the appointment</u>, notify the <u>School Office via email</u> on: attendance@woodhall.herts.sch.uk <li data-bbox="427 1888 911 2045">2. As soon as possible, provide the school with proof of your appointment. A copy can be emailed or given to a member of the Office Staff. 	<p>Please do not book medical or dental appointments during the school day unless it is absolutely necessary. If it is during school hours, your child should attend school before and after the appointment.</p>

Scenario	Steps to take...	Return to School...
<p>My child needs a day off school for a non-medical reason (holidays/ family events/ religious observance/ bereavements)</p>	<p>1. Before the <u>day of absence</u>, you must notify the School Office via email on:</p> <p>attendance@woodhall.herts.sch.uk</p> <p>2. <u>School will call you.</u> We will call you to discuss your circumstances.</p>	<p>As soon as your child is able to, they must return to school.</p> <p>Please be aware that the headteacher can only authorise absence in <u>exceptional circumstances</u> and this will be dealt with on a case by case basis.</p> <p><u>School cannot authorise any absence for holidays. This will go down as unauthorised.</u></p>
<p>I cannot get my child to school for personal reasons.</p>	<p>1. Before the <u>day of absence</u>, notify the School Office via email on:</p> <p>attendance@woodhall.herts.sch.uk</p> <p>2. <u>School will call you.</u> We will call you to discuss your circumstances.</p>	<p>Unless your child is ill or there are exceptional circumstances, it is a <u>legal requirement for your child to have good attendance.</u></p> <p>Please be aware that the headteacher can only authorise absence in <u>exceptional circumstances</u> and this will be dealt with on a case by case basis.</p> <p>You must make arrangements with family or friends to get your child to school.</p> <p>If you have personal issues and this is affecting your child's attendance, we can try to help you.</p>

What will happen if...	
My child's attendance has not been authorised?	Authorisation is at the School's Discretion in consultation with the LEA. Authorisation is not automatically given because you have informed the school of absence.
I do not inform the school of my child's absence?	Schools also have a safeguarding duty, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences. If you do not inform us of your child's absence, we will not authorise it. If we are concerned for your child's welfare, we may ask the Police to do a welfare check or report the absence to social services.
If my child's attendance is less than 96%?	If your child has poor attendance you will be notified in the following steps: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You will receive a warning email to alert you of your child's attendance. Early on in the term, even one or two absences can affect the attendance percentage. Please do not worry at this point, accept this as a 'heads up' and ensure your child's attendance improves in the coming weeks. 2. If your child's attendance does not improve, you will be sent a final warning email. This indicates we have serious concerns about your child's attendance. You must make every effort to improve your child's attendance after this email. 3. Should your child's attendance still not improve, we will organise a meeting with you. You may be called to a meeting earlier if there are specific issues we wish to discuss with you. 4. If your child's attendance still does not improve, we are required by law to notify the Local Authority (LA). We will send you an email to warn you that we are contacting the LA. 5. School may consider applying to the LA for a penalty notice. If your child's parents live at separate addresses, each adult with a parental responsibility will be included within the application for a Fixed Penalty Notice.
My child has a high level of absence during the half term?	We will always try to work with you to help you improve your child's attendance. However, schools have to inform the Local Authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from school, have irregular attendance, or have missed 10 school days or more without the school's permission. If your child is persistently absent, the LA Attendance Officer may write to you or arrange to meet with you to discuss your child's attendance. If your child's attendance does not improve significantly, each adult with parental responsibility may be issued a Fixed Penalty Notice for £60. This will increase to £120 if it is not paid within 28 days.

<p>I am called to an attendance meeting?</p>	<p>We want to work with you to improve your child’s attendance. If we have concerns, we will arrange a meeting with you. In this meeting, we will develop a plan to improve attendance and can discuss your child’s specific situation including any medical, social or emotional barriers to good attendance. Please bring any letters, information or evidence you think will help.</p>
<p>I am struggling to get my child into school?</p>	<p>Please contact the School Office. We can arrange a meeting to discuss your circumstances and develop a plan to help improve your child’s attendance.</p>
<p>My child’s attendance is excellent?</p>	<p>Following the reduction in Covid-19 restrictions, we will be working with the children and Woodhall School Parliament to develop new and exciting ways to promote excellent attendance throughout the school. We will share this once our new plans are finalised.</p>
<p>I have spoken to the class teacher, Miss Lake or the Office Staff about attendance.</p>	<p>Mrs Nikki Gillibrand or Mrs Cooper Battersby are responsible for school attendance.</p> <p>Life in school is very busy and sometimes you may catch the class teacher, Miss Lake or Sue Fleming to give them information about attendance. Of course you may continue to share information with any member of staff, but from now on, they will ask you to also pass this information on to us directly via the new attendance email address: attendance@woodhall.herts.sch.uk (unless the matter is of a confidential nature)</p> <p>This ensures that we have the most up-to-date information and can make effective decisions regarding your child’s attendance.</p>
<p>My child has a chronic illness that affects their attendance?</p>	<p>Please arrange to meet with Mrs Cooper Battersby, the school Attendance Lead. We can work together to put measures in place to ensure your child has access to school and their education.</p>
<p>My child is frequently late?</p>	<p>The Register is taken at 8:50am and children are invited to attend our ‘soft start’ from 8:30. If your child is not in class by 8:50, they will be marked as late in the register. If your child is not in class by 9:30am, they will be marked as absent from the session.</p> <p>If your child has three or more periods of lateness within a fortnightly period, you will be informed by email. If this persists, you may be called in for a meeting to discuss your child’ punctuality.</p> <p>If you have difficulties getting your child into school on time, please contact the School Office. We can arrange a meeting to discuss your circumstances and develop a plan to help improve your child’s punctuality.</p>