

Attendance policy

Woodlands Primary Academy



*Creative
Education
Trust*



Approved by:

Luke Bowers, Director
of Performance

Date: September 2023

Last reviewed on:

August 2023

Next review due by:

August 2024

Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. Recording attendance	5
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	7
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	8
7. Attendance monitoring	8
8. Monitoring arrangements	9
9. Links with other policies	9
Appendix 1: attendance codes	9

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Promoting good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We expect every pupil to attend every session unless there is a legitimate reason for absence.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- › Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- › [School census guidance](#)
- › [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- › [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Creative Education Trust Board and Academy Council

The governing boards are responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy through both the Academy Council and the Academy Improvement Board

3.2 The Principal/Headteacher

The Principal/Headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the academy
- › Establishing and maintaining an effective culture of attendance at the academy
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governing boards
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- › Agreeing any part-time timetables within the school

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Laura Brett and can be contacted via 01493 665314.

3.4 The attendance improvement team

The school attendance improvement team is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the Principal/Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance improvement manager, Becky Aldred, can be contacted via 01493 665314 or enquiries@woodlandsprimaryacademy.org.uk.

3.5 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance in a timely manner and for each session/lesson as determined by academy leaders. This must be undertaken using the correct codes, and submitted on the defined academy reporting system (e.g. Arbor).

3.6 School administration support staff

School administration support staff will:

- › Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Transfer calls from parents/carers to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every session on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:35am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school 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

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Arrive at school every day on time
- › Attend every session punctually
- › Be prepared for learning, in line with the academy policy

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

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 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:15pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:35am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

In the case of an unplanned absence, parents are to send a message to school via Arbor or leave a message on the school's absence line informing the office of their child's name, class and reason for their absence.

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

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

4.3 Planned absence

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

If a child has a medical or dental appointment during school hours, parents are to inform the school office at least 24 hours in advance either by sending a message via Arbor or contacting the school office, who will request to see the child's appointment card/letter.

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 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

Children who arrive late to school must report to the school office. The time the child arrives in school, their reason for being late and their lunch requirements are recorded before they go to class.

Punctuality is monitored by the attendance team. Persistent lateness is addressed with parents as needed this may include informal conversations, letters to parents and follow-up meetings as required.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- › Call and/or message the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may the school may door knock at the home address or contact police to carry out a welfare check.
- › 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 school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at twice yearly parents' evening meetings and at the end of each academic year as part of the annual report. Attendance is also available for parents to view on the Arbor app.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher 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 Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unavoidable or unforeseen events that necessitate a child's absence.

The school 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 two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible from the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › 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 school 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 school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Principal/Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- › The 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 pupil 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 or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

All Creative Education Trust academies actively promote the importance of good attendance. The following strategies are employed at this academy:

- › Weekly certificates for Key Stage classes with the highest attendance
- › Celebration of the highest attending classes on social media
- › Display to celebrate good attendance, including the highest attending classes
- › Individual certificates/badges for the highest attending children per term
- › Supportive measures such as breakfast and after school club places

7. Attendance monitoring

The academy monitors attendance on a daily basis to ensure timely and reliable information can be provided to key stakeholders, and to rapidly respond to any trends or patterns which present themselves.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The academy will:

- › Formally monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school 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 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.

The Creative Education Trust Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It does this through routine reporting to the Academy Improvement Board and Academy Council. These boards hold the Principal/Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy in the same way. At these meetings the academy will compare attendance data to the national average for all pupils, year groups and pupil groups. Trends from the previous meetings will also be presented.

Academies where attendance is causing concern will have monthly meetings with the Director of Performance and will have an external review of attendance practices. This will continue until such a time when attendance is no longer a cause for concern.

7.2 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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to key staff and school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Present attendance data to both the Academy Improvement Board and the Academy Council on a regular basis to allow additional scrutiny
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

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 school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Send letters to parents when children are close to becoming persistent absent as well as when they become persistently absent.
- Hold meetings with parents when children's attendance is not improving despite letters and reminders.
- Introduce attendance support plans for those families who need support to improve their child's attendance with 6 weekly reviews.
- Close monitoring of the attendance of those children identified as vulnerable – these include children on attendance support plans.
- Offer home visits for those families who may not want to attend meetings in school or who need support with school avoidance for example.

8. Alternative Provision

All professionals have a statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The tracking and reporting of attendance at alternative provision is an essential component in achieving this.

Children at alternative provision are additionally vulnerable and will be closely monitored. The attendance ambition for children at alternative provision will be the same as they are for any other child.

The senior leader with responsibility for alternative provision is Trudie Jowett.

Most children at alternative provision will be D coded (dual registered at another school) and the academy is ultimately responsible for ensuring their safety and well-being, including home visits when necessary i.e., in the case of non-attendance

The arrangements for monitoring of attendance, contacting of parents and carrying out safe and well checks will form part of a written individual plan, agreed with the child, parents and alternative provider before the child begins their placement.

The alternative provider and the academy must communicate twice per day (AM and PM sessions) regarding attendance to ensure regular and effective information is provided to academy leaders.

Attendance at off-site alternative provision will be monitored daily and we will ensure that swift action is taken when a child does not attend their alternative provision place.

The academy will make regular visits to the alternative provision to meet the child, their link tutor and to check on their well-being, attendance and academic progress.

The senior leader with responsibility for alternative provision will ensure arrangements are in place to formally monitor, report on attendance at alternative provision to SLT on a weekly basis, liaising with the DSL, SENCo, Mental Health Lead, LAC coordinator or other key colleagues as necessary.

Children whose attendance falls below the academy's target will receive support and intervention in line with this policy. The academy will work jointly with the alternative provision to put in place a comprehensive, regularly reviewed, written plan to support better attendance.

9. Policy review arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Creative Education Trust Board. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration

L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day