Woodlands Primary School and Nursery

Attendance Policy

Date of policy review:	October 2027 (or sooner should guidance change)

Safeguarding Statement

At Woodlands Primary School, we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our children so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every child should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services, at Woodlands Primary School and Nursery. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our children by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

Our Aims

All staff at Woodlands are committed to providing a full, effective educational experience for all children. To ensure that all of our children receive a high quality education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As such, we consistently strive to ensure high attendance levels for all children. We support children and their families; identifying barriers to attendance and punctuality and addressing these as rapidly as possible. Our school actively promotes and encourages 100 % attendance for all our children and we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through a whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance.

This policy has been updated in line with the latest statutory guidance for schools and local authorities '*Working together to improve school attendance*'. If you need any help in accessing this document, please email woodlands.enquiries@taw.org.uk.

Attendance and Punctuality Expectations of Children and Parents

- The gates open at **8.30am, for nursery children**. Children remain the responsibility of their parents and carers until they enter the school building.
- Class doors in EYFS open at 8.30am to allow younger children to be dropped off before older siblings.
- The main gates open at 8.40am for Key Stage 1 and 2 children.
- Children in reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are expected to be in class for 8.45am to start their day's learning.
- Gates are closed promptly at 8.50am, any children arriving after this time will be recorded as late (code L).
- At 9am, the main gate is locked and children must enter the school building via the school office.
- If children arrive after 9.20am, registers are closed, and they will be recorded with a 'U' code which indicates an unauthorised absence.

Each day consists of two sessions and registers are taken in the morning and afternoon. Being on time matters as Teachers plan early morning work to recap and revise learning from the previous day (MFS). When children are on time, they feel part of the class team and this ensures they are in structured routines from the start of the day, reducing the risk of

dysregulated behaviours. Arriving late can have a negative impact on emotional health and well-being and this can lead to children not wanting to attend school.
The Headteacher is the Senior Attendance Champion who oversees attendance. The Inclusion Manager has the daily responsibility for attendance and is supported by an Administration Assistant in the School office. You can contact these staff by phoning the School office or sending a dojo via the class teacher.

What you should do if your child is absent:

If you know your child will not be in school, parents and carers have responsibility to inform school of the absence. Parents can phone the school office on **01952 386070** or send a dojo to the class teacher, the Inclusion Lead or the admin team. This absence will then be recorded on our registers.

If no contact has been made, or there is doubt as to the authenticity of the reasons for absence provided, made by the parents or carers:

- A home visit may be done.
- We will try to contact by text, phone or email.
- This will be repeated on day two and day three if no contact has been received.
- Poor attendance is considered a safeguarding issue and at any stage, contact may be made with other agencies such as Strengthening Families or Social workers if there are concerns.
- If no response has been received after five days, we will consider a referral to Family Connect (01952 386385).

Celebrating and promoting good attendance

We know that children who have good attendance get the most of their school journey, achieve more and form good habits for life. Attendance is promoted using a variety of strategies at Woodlands.

Attendance percentages are calculated weekly, for the best class attendance in Key stage 1 and Key stage 2. At the end of every week a trophy is given to the class with the best attendance, and the best punctuality, in addition to a dream token for the class 'Dream Jar'. This is also reported in the weekly newsletter; published on class dojos.
At the end of each half term, certificates are given to children who have 100% attendance. Children with 100% attendance at the end of each term are given a 100% badge.

We also celebrate the children who have improved their attendance at the end of each term. Attendance is discussed at each parents evening so that parents are aware of what their child's attendance is.

Every week, attendance is monitored with the support of school attendance monitors (year 6 children). Each child with 100% for the week will have a raffle ticket and an attendance sticker or dojos. At the end of the school year, one raffle ticket is drawn from each class jar and one child wins a prize – last year this was a scooter.

The impact of these measures improves attendance, resulting in the number of persistently absent children decreasing and the rewards are reviewed annually.

What you can expect from Woodlands

Being at school is crucial to enable every child to be the best they can be. At Woodlands, we aim to create a learning environment where children want to be in school and to ensure we support families in maintaining their child's attendance. Senior leaders and members of our inclusion team are visible and available daily to talk over any concerns or issues. Where children can show some reluctance to separate from adults or cross the threshold first thing we are here to help. Assistance should always be sought from the class teacher in the first instance.

We have a robust Early Help Offer at Woodlands, where we offer a substantial support package for parents, carers and children. Our staff will meet with parents who would like additional support and will discuss what we can do to help.

We know that by working together we achieve more. If we cannot resolve or deal with an issue we can access a range of professionals, for example healthcare professionals, strengthening families' workers, housing specialists and more. Our early help offer is defined by our families and their needs – we do not have a one size fits all approach.

Using data to improve school attendance

Our attendance target is 96% and we expect children to arrive on time before 8.50am every day.

School staff hold attendance review meetings for any child with attendance under 92%. At every review, if the child's attendance has decreased since the last review meeting, appropriate actions are considered. This could include:

- monitoring
- contacting the parent/carer by phone or letter
- inviting the parent/carer to a meeting
- suggesting an action plan for the family
- referring to the Local Authority.

If the child is on the SEN register, any meetings may be held with the SENDCO present. If children's attendance is 90% or below they are classed (by the Government) as persistently absent, if they have attendance 50% or below, they are classed as severely absent. We will Identify if there are particular groups of children whose absences are a cause for concern. We can then put in place measures to monitor and support these groups of children. We look at Woodlands' data together with local and national attendance data and share with the Governing board. Children are legally required to attend school from the term after their fifth birthday.

If a parent is thinking about electively home educating their child, we would suggest they look at the Telford and Wrekin website - https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20025/school_information/3353/elective_home_education_ehe.

Reducing absence

Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a child misses 50% or more of school. We hold regular attendance reviews every three weeks and look at every child's attendance.

- We will phone or send a letter to parents and carers to informing them of the attendance.
- If appropriate an Attendance Concern Meeting can be offered.
- If attendance still does not improve a further letter will be sent, at this stage proof for reasons of absence will be requested, in order to authorise absences.
- Where attendance remains a concern despite support being offered, if there is a lack of engagement, a warning will be sent from the LA, this explains that improvement needs to occur or there is a risk of prosecution.
- If concerns remain a warning notice is sent and after this if no improvements occur then the parents and carers may be invited to attend an 'Interview under Caution' which may lead to prosecution and a criminal record.
- Alternatively, unauthorised absences may be subject to the Penalty Notice Framework as set out below.

There is new statutory guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' and this emphasises a supportive ethos. We will always endeavour to support families where we can and look at how we can reduce lateness and absences.

We do not authorise holidays or extended leave during term time.

Woodlands do not authorise holidays or extended leave during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence during term time will not normally be authorised unless the Headteacher is satisfied that exceptional circumstances apply. All requests are considered on an individual case-by-case basis. If leave in term time is taken school has to consider the new statutory guidance. From August 19th 2024, the Government introduced a new national framework for Penalty Notices (changes apply from 1st September 2024 in Telford and Wrekin.)

These are the significant aspects to be aware of:

- If your child has ten sessions of unauthorised absence in a ten school week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These ten sessions may include any unauthorised absence and do not have to be consecutive. Unauthorised absences are recorded for children who are late after the register has closed (arriving after 9.15am), where no reason has been given for absence, or have taken leave in term time without prior permission from the Head Teacher.
- In Telford, penalty Notices increased to £160 from September 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.

- Any 2nd Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160.
- A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three-year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, - alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.
- In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – However, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised absence in term time for holidays or extended leave, where information for parents is included on school's website or there has been a simple warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken.
- For the purposes of school attendance legislation, the term "parent" includes all natural parents, regardless of whether they are married or living with the child, and any person who has parental responsibility for a child or has day-to-day care of the child.

'Parents should always apply to the Headteacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from the school office. (DfE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence).'

In developing and publishing the new national framework, the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors and Headteacher of Woodlands support this and students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The DfE Guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Feb 2024) states that: Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. (Paragraph 38.)

Each application for leave in term time will be considered and if it is agreed and authorised the Headteacher will determine the duration of any leave. However, if the application is not agreed and the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised. Parents will be notified of any decision in writing. This notification may be hand delivered directly to the parent or posted to the parents' home address.

As a school we are asked to inform you that in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, if your child is absent for ten school sessions within a ten week rolling period and that absence is unauthorised, you may be subject to a Penalty Notice, criteria is as detailed above.

If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. For example, when a parent purposefully tries to avoid a Penalty Notice by taking their child out of school when there is only four child days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD day or bank holiday attached to that week.

If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, when parent(s) are deliberately or purposefully avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for events such as birthdays and taking their child out of school, or when there are only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD day or bank holiday.

Children Missing in Education

The school has a duty to inform the Local Authority when a child fails to attend regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period in accordance with statutory requirements. The school will follow local Children Missing Education procedures where appropriate.

Using data to improve school attendance

Our attendance target is 96% and we expect children to arrive on time before 8.50am every day.
School staff hold attendance review meetings for any child with attendance under 92%. At every review, if the child's attendance has decreased since the last review meeting, appropriate actions are considered. This could include:

- monitoring,
- contacting the parent/carer by phone or letter,
- inviting the parent/carer to a meeting
- referring to the Local Authority.

If the child is on the SEN register, any meetings may be held with the SENDCO present. If children's attendance is 90% or below they are classed (by the Government) as persistently absent. We will Identify whether are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. We look at Woodlands' data together with local and national attendance data and share with the Governing board.

Updates

In July 2026 the DfE reviewed and amended the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' statutory guidance. This guidance sits alongside the 'National Framework for Penalty Notices' which the Government introduced in August 2024 and 'The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024' and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.
In Telford & Wrekin it is the delegated responsibility of the Attendance Support Team to issues Penalty Notices following referrals from schools, and only they can issue Penalty Notices relating to school absence.

It is only the Headteacher (or delegated member of School Staff) who has the discretion to authorise any request for leave in term time and it is also they that decide the duration of that leave. Parents must submit a request for leave in term time to the school, allowing ample time for consideration to be given. Any circumstances that parents wish to be considered should be included in the request. Holidays should not be booked before permission is granted. The legislation does not allow for any school to adopt a blanket ban, all requests for leave in term time will be considered to determine if there are exceptional circumstances and parents must be notified of that decision.

The government introduced changes in legislation from August 2024 that parents need to be aware of:

- If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 school week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and sessions do not have to be consecutive.
- If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met, so for eight sessions of unauthorised absence. This might apply for example, when parent(s) are deliberately or purposefully avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for events such as birthdays and taking their child out of school, or when there are only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD day or bank holiday
- Penalty Notices increased to £160 from August 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.
- Any 2nd Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160
- A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three-year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, - alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.
- Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. as is usually the case for an unauthorised holiday in term time).
- In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – However, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included in schools' attendance policy and on school's website, or a warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.

'Parents should always apply to the Headteacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from the school. (DfE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence)'.

In developing and publishing the National Framework, the Government renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The

Governors and Headteacher of this school support this initiative. The legislation does not allow for blanket bans, therefore all requests for leave in term time will be considered. However, in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, DfE guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance - July 2026, National Framework for Penalty Notices 2024 and local Code of Conduct, students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The DfE Guidance- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (amended July 2026) states that: Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. (Paragraph 37.)

Each application for leave in term time will be considered and if it is agreed and authorised the Headteacher will determine the duration of any leave. However, if the application is not agreed and the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised. Parents will be notified of any decision in writing. This notification may be hand delivered directly to the parent, emailed to the registered email address of the parent held on school records or posted to the parents' home address.

As a school we are asked to inform you that in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, if your child is absent for 10 school sessions within a 10 week rolling period and that absence is unauthorised, you may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine, criteria is as detailed above.

Please follow the links below for more detailed information:

Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/resources-for-families/

If a parent is thinking about electively home educating their child, we would suggest they look at the Telford and Wrekin website - https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20025/school_information/3353/elective_home_education_ehe.