Attendance Policy

Motivate • Educate • Achieve

Date of Policy: October 2024 *(amended January 2026)* **Reviewed:** September 2026 **Ratified by the Full Governing Body:** 15 September 2026 **Date of Next Review:** September 2027

Our School Values: *We are respectful, ambitious, creative, inclusive, independent and we persevere.*

1. Aims

Woodcock Hill is committed to meeting its obligations with regards to school attendance including those laid out in the Department of Education's (D*f*E's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils;
- promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence;
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- acting early to address patterns of absence.

The school will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on 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 2024 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

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 Governing Body

The Governing Board is expected to:

- recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- ensure the Head Teacher and school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- regularly review (*at least* termly) attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- hold the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- implementation of this policy at the school
- monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.

3.3 Designated Senior Leader (Attendance Champion)

The Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of data analysis
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- oversees, in conjunction with the pastoral team, calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- working with education welfare officers/external agencies to tackle persistent absence.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (the Attendance Champion) is the Head Teacher and may be contacted via the school office or e-mail: enquiry@woodcockhillprimaryschool.co.uk

3.4 Pastoral Support Manager

The Pastoral Support Manager is responsible for:

- monitoring attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- reporting concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher
- working with external agencies to tackle persistent absence
- arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- requesting support for parents to overcome attendance barriers for example Early Help
- advising the Head Teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

3.5 Class Teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- recording attendance daily
- using the correct codes
- submitting this information to the school office.

3.6 School Office Staff

School office staff are responsible for:

- taking calls from parents about absence
- recording absence information from parents on the school system
- making first day calls
- reporting concerns to the Pastoral Manager e.g. ‘safe and well check’ required.

3.7 Reporting and Monitoring Absence

The school office takes calls about absence and monitors absence emails from parents on a day-to-day basis and record this information on the school system. They will also transfer calls from parents to the Pastoral Support Manager in order to provide parents with more detailed support on attendance.

The school Attendance Champion has oversight of:

- monitoring and analysing attendance/absence data
- benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher.

3.8 Parents/Carers

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- make sure their child attends every day on time
- call the school to report their child's absence before 0830hrs 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.

3.9 Pupils

Our school expectations are that all employees and pupils are expected to be:

Here
Everyday
Ready
On time and
Engaged to
Strive for success

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

The Schools will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.
The School will take an attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon 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 attendance codes.

The School will also record:

- for pupils of compulsory school age, 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.

The School will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.2 Registration Times

Pupils must arrive by their allocated time on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 0855hrs and will be kept open until 0905hrs. The register for the second session will be taken at 1300hrs and will be kept open until 1305hrs.

4.3 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 0830hrs or as soon as practically possible.

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

Where the absence is 5 or more consecutive school days or 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. The School will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

The school must provide Birmingham City Council with the names and addresses of pupils who miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days due to illness who may need additional support from the local authority to continue their education, as set out in the recently updated statutory guidance for local authorities Education for Children with health needs who cannot attend school.

4.4 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, the school encourages 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. Section 5 contains details of which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.5 Lateness and Punctuality

The class teachers submit the registers at 9.05am. Pupils who arrive late:

- after the register has been submitted and before the register has closed (9.25 am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- after the register has closed (9.25am) will be marked using the appropriate code
- parents of pupils who are persistently late will receive support from the Pastoral Support Manager.

4.6 Following Up Absence

Where a pupil the school expects to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, which is done via the main school office.

- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will:

- make a home visit, on or before day 3, and/or call the police for a welfare check.

If absence continues, or the school has safeguarding concerns, the school will:

- Contact Birmingham Children's Trust.

4.7 Reporting To Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly attendance reports.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-Time Absence

The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if the Head Teacher consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion and any requests for these must be made in writing.

The School considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for authorised absence may include:

- illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.3 and 4.4 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 and/or Birmingham City Council to confirm whether the day is set apart
- a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- other exceptional circumstances.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Our Attendance Champion promotes attendance and oversees the attendance reward system. Classes are informed of how well their class has performed in terms of punctuality and attendance each week through our weekly Celebration Assemblies.

Each pupil has an attendance record card which they complete daily. If they arrive at school on time, ready to learn, every day for one week then they earn a point. Points can be saved and exchanged for prizes in our attendance shop. This approach is designed not to disincentive pupils who are genuinely unwell as each week is a fresh opportunity to earn an Attendance point.

Children approaching 100% attendance over a term receive an attendance badge which they can wear on their school uniform.

- A blue badge for attendance approaching 100% in the Autumn Term
- A green badge for attendance approaching 100% in the Spring Term
- A yellow badge for attendance approaching 100% in the Summer Term ***PLUS***
- A Super Hero Goodie Bag for attendance approaching 100% throughout the school year

For each week that their child attends school every day, on time, parents receive a raffle ticket which is entered into a half-termly prize draw.

Each year, parents receive a copy of our Attendance Rewards & Information for Parents and Carers leaflet.

7. Supporting Pupils who are Absent or Returning to School

7.1 Pupils' Absence due to Complex Barriers to Attendance

The school will:

- work with families/external agencies to alleviate barriers and/or create bespoke timetables for re-entry to school after prolonged absence.

7.2 Pupils' Absence due to Mental or Physical Ill Health or SEND

The school will:

- work with families/external agencies to alleviate barriers and/or create bespoke timetables for re-entry to school after prolonged absence
- where a pupil has an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils Returning to School after a Lengthy or Unavoidable Period of Absence

The school will:

- Work closely with families/external agencies to ensure a smooth transition back to school. Strategies that may be employed, but not limited to, are: modified timetable, peer support, pastoral support.

8. Attendance

8.1 Monitoring

The School will:

- 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.

8.2 Analysing Attendance

The School 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.

8.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The School will:

- provide regular attendance reports in order to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

8.4 Reducing Persistent and Severely Persistent Absence

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

The school 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 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
- follow Birmingham City Council's Support First School Attendance Framework for supporting and promoting better attendance for individual pupils and families.
- engage in support from the local authority, Birmingham City Council, in attendance support meetings.

8.5 Legal Sanctions

The aim of the school is to support families and not to prosecute them. The government has recently introduced a National Framework for Local Councils in managing non-attendance (Chapter 4).

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school for first offences *the amount of the penalty is £160 (£80 if paid within 21 days).* If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute.

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who receive a second fine for the same child within any three-year period.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, the Local Authority may seek other action like applying to the family court for an Education Supervision Order and/or a prosecution. A prosecution could lead to a fine of up to £2,500, a community order, or a jail sentence of up to 3 months.

Please note:

- penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- The term 'Parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or D*f*E is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Senior Leadership Teams.

10. Links to Other Policies

- Positive Behaviours Policy
- Bereavement Policy
- Mental Health and Well-Being Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Birmingham City Council

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CODES - DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved educational activity
K	LA arranged provision at a place other than a school	Approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience	Approved educational activity
C	Absent with leave (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
C1	Absent due to participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Part-time timetable	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J1	Interview	Authorised absence
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence

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D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
Q	Lack of transport or boarding access arrangements arranged by LA	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y1	Transport normally provided by LA or school not available	Not counted in possible attendances
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel due to local, national or international emergency	Not counted in possible attendances
Y3	School partially closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y4	Whole school site unexpectantly closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y5	Pupil in criminal justice detention	Not counted in possible attendances
Y6	Travel or attendance contrary to public health guidance or law on transmission of disease	Not counted in possible attendances
Y7	Unable to attend due to unavoidable cause	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils (planned closure)	Not counted in possible attendances

KEY

Present
Approved Education Activity (Present)
Authorised absence
Unauthorised absence
Not counted in possible attendances