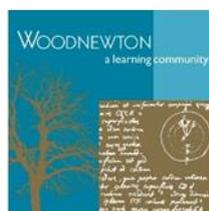




WOODNEWTON ACADEMY TRUST

Attendance Policy (Children)

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Owner	Directors
Person Responsible for Policy	
Linked to	Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
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Attendance Policy

This policy is to ensure consistency across all schools in terms of promoting attendance and links with Woodnewton Academy Trusts Policy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

All our schools aim to provide an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff, school Governors and Directors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

We aim to have successful schools and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is appreciated that having good attendance levels by all children and staff will enhance learning by:

- Ensuring the child experiences as many learning opportunities as is possible;
- Providing consistency of adult for children in school.

All school staff are responsible for ensuring the following actions take place:

- Registers of attendance are completed twice a day and completed accurately;
- Differentiating between authorised and unauthorised absence;
- Responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care;
- Monitoring attendance data in order to identify patterns of absenteeism;
- Contacting and working with parent(s) of a child whose rate of attendance is causing concern;
- Providing regular information to parent(s) in regard to their child's attendance and through the home/school agreement, prospectus, website, Family Worker etc;
- Contacting and working with EIPT to improve low rates of attendance;
- Promoting and celebrating regular and good rates of school attendance (96%+)

Parents' are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school as often as possible. If they fail in this duty they maybe held guilty of an offence.

Children are responsible for attending all lessons and being aware of the importance of having a good rate of attendance.

When dealing with the absence of a child the following actions will be undertaken:

- An absence will be marked if a child is not in class before the registers are closed and returned to the office;
- In the morning registers will be opened at 8.55am. Any child arriving after 9am will be recorded as late.
- Registers will close at 9.15am
- Any child that arrives at school after 9.15am will receive an unauthorised mark in the register.
- An absence will be investigated during the first morning when a child is absent unless it has been previously authorised;
- Any unauthorised absence, for which no reason is forthcoming, will be monitored and investigated by the Attendance Officer.

An absence will be authorised if:

- The child has been granted leave by the Head of Academy (in exceptional circumstances only, this does not include foreseeable events such as holidays and celebrations);
- The child was unwell or has a medical appointment;
- The child is partaking in a day set aside for religious observance;
- The child has suffered a family bereavement;
- The child is attending an open day at another school;
- The child does not live within walking distance and no suitable travel arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
- The child's parents are Travellers and the child is engaged in his/her parents' work;
- Only the school can authorise an absence, not parents. The school will authorise absences due to illness, unless the school has a genuine concern about the veracity of an illness. The school can request medical evidence.

An absence will remain unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming;
- Medical evidence is not provided as requested;
- The Head of Academy is dissatisfied with the explanation provided;
- The child stays at home to look after other siblings;
- The child has a family day out, is shopping or to celebrate unexceptional special days (E.g.; a birthday);
- Taken during periods of statutory testing.
- The child is taken on a family holiday

Where the attendance rate for a child falls below 90% over the period of one term (in a six term year) the Attendance Officer will become involved.

When dealing with an absence rate of less than 90% the Attendance Officer will complete the following steps:

- Contact the parents/carers and offer support to enable barriers to accessing education to be provided, where appropriate
- Consider the use of pupil premium funding, if appropriate and if impact can be measured
- Discuss with the child any barriers to them attending school
- Consider reporting persistent absenteeism to the local Authority for appropriate action to be taken

A Penalty Notice may be issued;

- When a pupil has 10 sessions (5 days) or more of unauthorised absence over the previous 6 school weeks;
- When a pupil has 5 consecutive days recorded as unauthorised
- When a pupil has accumulated a minimum of 10% unauthorised absence of the academic year;
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Example letter for parents which should be sent out at the beginning of each year

Dear Parent/Carer,

XXXXX a learning community is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. We believe that all children are entitled to a world class education which will equip them to become fully participatory members of society. We aim therefore to ensure that our children have access to high quality learning experiences, where emotional well-being, academic achievement, physical development and high expectations are placed firmly at the centre of all we do. Irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to under achievement and low attainment and impedes a child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

Punctuality

The school is working hard to improve attendance and the punctual arrival of our pupils as these factors considerably, effect the children's work and achievements. It is imperative that children should be in their classrooms by 08:55am at the latest as this is the time at which the register is taken. Any child arriving after 9am will be recorded as late. **Any child that arrives at school after 09:15am will receive an unauthorised mark in the register.**

Dental and medical appointments

Parents/Carers are asked most earnestly not to arrange these appointments during school sessions, except in cases of urgency, so that considerable interference with school work is avoided. Please do not keep children out of school for the whole day unless absolutely necessary. To enable the school to authorise medical appointments, evidence must be provided.

Leave of Absence

Northamptonshire County Council state:

“School attendance is a key area. In line with government expectations, the Local Authority firmly believes that for pupils to progress and achieve their full potential, they need to attend school. Changes of legislation in 2013 mean parents are no longer entitled to take their child on holiday in term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Interim Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. The Interim Principal would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.

A Penalty Notice may be issued:

- When a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions (5 consecutive days) recorded as unauthorised.
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.”

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the children, staff and you, the Parents/Carers, for your support and continued co-operation with regard to school attendance and punctuality.

Yours sincerely