



Attendance Policy

Committee with oversight for this policy	Full Governing Board
Policy to be approved by	Full Governing Board
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Attendance policy information for pupils and parents

	Name	Contact details
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Good attendance begins with our school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn. Good attendance starts with close and productive relationships with parents and pupils. At Woodlands Academy, we are committed to treating all pupils and parents with dignity. Staff at Woodlands are expected to model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.

Good attendance means coming to school regularly, on time and arriving prepared to learn.

Regular attendance is attendance at school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an 'authorisable' reason to be absent; [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

The Department for Education (DfE) expects the school, local authority, and parents to work together to improve attendance. The Summary table in the link below should be read alongside the Working together to improve school attendance guidance. This guidance is statutory, and schools, trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities must have regard to it as part of their efforts to maintain high levels of school attendance: [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Sections

Expectations and daily routines

Data and monitoring

Escalation of procedures

Expectations and daily routines

Good attendance is important because:

- Improving attendance is in everyone's interests and it's everyone's business.
- Regular attendance is an indicator of safe, healthy, and successful children.
- The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment (DfE, 2024).
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically and find school routines, schoolwork, and friendships easier to cope with. Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attendance encourages responsible learning habits and prepares children for higher education and for their working life.
- For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra familial harms, including crime.

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ensuring your child attends school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an 'authorisable' reason to be absent. Only the school can authorise an absence.
- Following the school procedures for reporting absences.
- Arranging (where possible) all non-emergency medical and dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays.
- Do not plan any holidays during term time.
- Keeping the school updated by telephone, email, or letter of any changes of circumstances.
- Making sure we always have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, email addresses and emergency contact details.

Daily routines

Punctuality

Starting the day on time, being organised and following routine are part of the formula for having a successful day. Being on time to school is not just a matter of minutes on the clock; it is a fundamental aspect of personal and academic development. By fostering punctuality, schools and families contribute to the holistic growth of pupils, preparing them for the challenges that lie ahead.

Parents remain responsible for their child's punctuality at the start of the school day. Arriving late to school on a consistent basis can have longer-term academic effects. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the pupil. If showing up late to school becomes a habit, children may develop the notion that lateness is acceptable behaviour. This belief can negatively impact their future work ethic and employment opportunities.

Morning registration is from 8:30am. Gates are open from 8:30am for pupils to access a soft start to their school day. Your child must come through the school gate at 8:45am, at the latest.

Registers close at 9:00 am.

Breakfast club is available for all pupils from 8:00am and can be booked through the school gateway app. Please speak to the school office for more information.

All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness, if known, will also be recorded. This information is discussed at regular meetings with the local authority Link Attendance Officer and can be made available to the courts in the form of a report should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.

Arrival after the close of registration, where there is not an acceptable reason, such as a medical appointment, will be marked as a missed session; unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with the DfE guidance. The U code has the value of an unauthorised absence. When late arrivals are frequent or persistent, we will want to discuss this with you to assess what support or guidance you, or your child may need. A referral may also be made to the Local Authority Attendance Service and or other external partners for additional support and monitoring.

Please remember that absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in learning. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time and ready to learn.

The school day ends for pupils as follows:

Pupils in EYFS and Years 1-3 finish at 3pm, pupils in Years 4-6 finish at 3:10pm.

Reporting absence

If your child is unable to attend school, please report them absent by: emailing the school office (office@woodlands.ealing.sch.uk), messaging the office through the School Gateway app or leaving a message on the school absence line (020 8998 2479). Where absences are prolonged, please keep the school updated daily.

If the school is unable to establish a reason for absence, a member of staff will also contact other emergency contacts parent/carers have provided to the school. Schools have a safeguarding role so home visits may be made by school staff and on occasion by the Local Authority Link Attendance Officer if a parent cannot be otherwise contacted. Further information is available in our [safeguarding policy](#).

Where a child has a social worker, school will inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.

Promoting and incentivising good attendance

Good attendance and punctuality will be acknowledged and rewarded by celebrating whole class attendance figures with our attendance cup and celebrating punctuality with the most punctual class trophy. Both trophies result in classes receiving additional golden time as a reward for their achievement. If a pupil attends every day for a week, their name will be available for random selection in Monday's assembly the following week for Golden Games. Children who are selected are invited to join Ms Moxom with a friend to play special games at lunchtime, including ping pong, darts and a variety of games.

Attendance concerns

Persistent Absence and Severe absence

Once a child's attendance falls to 90% for whatever reason, they are automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE) irrespective of the reason for absence as a **Persistent Absentee**. Once a child's attendance falls below 50%, they are termed **Severely Absent**.

Both scenarios present a severe problem for pupils. Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up, these gaps in their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement, particularly at GCSE.

Percentage attendance	Real terms	Missed lessons
95%	Attendance of 95% for the year equals 10 days that your child has been absent, that is 2 full school weeks of your child's learning missed for that year.	50 missed lessons
80%	Attendance of 80% for the year equals 38 days absent per year that is over 7 school weeks missed.	200 lessons
Punctuality	Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year	20 lessons

How will we ensure children are safe and tackle absence together?

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “authorised absences”. That is when the school accepts the reason given for absence.

We realise that there are rare and unavoidable occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent, such as sudden bereavement, unexpected parental illness, or a family crisis. If this happens, please let us know and we shall try to deal with the matter sympathetically.

Following such incidents, parents are expected to make any necessary arrangements for their child to return to school as soon as possible (ideally the next day). If the absence is likely to be prolonged, parents must write to the Headteacher outlining the reasons.

Please note that when illness is a frequent reason claimed for absence, the school may ask for evidence other than a parent's word to allow for further authorisation of absences. School may ask for evidence to accurately record absence in the attendance register – i.e. making a decision that code I is the absence code that accurately describes the reason the pupil is not in school for the session in question.

We may also ask parent/carers to provide further information about a medical condition to support the child in school.

School will speak to you about what evidence parent/carers are able to provide. You will not be expected to pay for medical evidence.

Early Intervention to support

We encourage parents to notify school as soon as you detect a reluctance in your child to attend school, as it is widely recognised that early intervention is key to prevent further deterioration.

Many children experience difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school. This may be due to friendship issues, schoolwork, exams. In such cases pupils are still expected to come to school regularly. Further absence can exacerbate the problem and can create further problems as gaps in their education widen and a sense of isolation ensues.

As a School there are ways, we can support pupils to overcome these hurdles and we will tailor an individual programme by considering a variety of reasonable adjustments to timetables, arrival/end of day routines, offer of counselling, Mentor, and signposting to external agencies.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out / Going shopping
- Because you have visitors
- Because you did not know school was open
- Interpreting or supporting a parent at a meeting.
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Parent’s illness (other than in an emergency)
- Where there is no explanation for an absence, or the school considers the reason given for
- the absence as unsatisfactory.
- Absence following or prior to a period of school closure (at the end and beginnings of terms and half terms) or following a period of authorised leave, unless satisfactory evidence to justify this has been provided.
- Term time holiday

Please be aware that unauthorised absence could result in a prosecution in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action.

As a school we aim to:

- Contact you daily when your child is absent without a reason provided either by text, email or phone call.
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child’s attendance or punctuality.
- The school will express a concern either verbally or by a letter of concern. If attendance does not improve or explanations for absence or lateness are unsatisfactory, you may be invited to a meeting. The school will also outline what the attendance expectations are and what actions will follow.
- Regularly inform parents about your child’s attendance and absence levels at parents’ evenings (where relevant) and in their end of year report.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in the school literature, on our website, at open evenings, in the Home-School Agreement and in pupil’s annual reports and during meetings.
- Share weekly attendance data with pupils in assemblies.
- Share weekly attendance data with parents in our fortnightly bulletins.
- Publish our attendance data on the school website.

We will seek to support you in various ways including:

- a) Offer regular meetings
- b) Consider reasonable adjustments in discussion with you and your child
- c) You may be invited to agree an Attendance Contract.
- d) We may invite you to participate in an [Early Help and Assessment Plan \(EHAP\)](#)
- e) A referral may also be made to external partners, including the Local Authority

School Attendance Service, Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service (ECIRS).

If your child has a medical condition, we will discuss this with you. We may devise an individual health care plan in collaboration with you and invite relevant healthcare professionals to contribute. Although individual healthcare plans are likely to be helpful in the majority of cases, it is possible that not all children will require one. We will need to make judgements about how your child's medical condition impacts on their ability to participate fully in school life, and the level of detail within plans will depend on the complexity of their condition and the degree of support needed.

Where appropriate work closely with local mental health services, school level senior mental health leads, the local School Nursing Service and the local authority's special educational needs and disability team(s) to ensure joined up support for families facing health or disability related barriers to attendance.

Additionally, if your child has an education health and care plan (EHCP), any attendance concerns will be discussed as part of the annual review. You may be asked to participate in an emergency annual review if your child has an EHCP and there are attendance concerns.

Ealing SENDIASS offers free, confidential, accurate and impartial advice and support to families living in Ealing with a child up to the age of 25 who has special educational needs or a disability (SEND). www.ealingsendiass.org.uk

Attendance support

[Ealing Families Directory](http://www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk) www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk

Phone: 020 8825 5588

[SAFE - Supportive Action for Families in Ealing | SAFE - Supportive Action for Families in Ealing | Ealing Council](#)

[Observations or situations that might lead to the use of an EHAP | Early Help Assessment and Plan \(EHAP\) | Ealing Council](#)

Bespoke attendance support can be discussed with the school on a case-by-case basis.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure efficient and full-time attendance at school of registered pupils of statutory school age (Education Act 1996). This is the legal requirement. The Local Authority School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families and other partnership agencies to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or are given a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine).

Regular attendance is defined to be in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.

Supreme court Ruling April 2017

Regular attendance is attendance at school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an 'authorisable' reason to be absent; (registration regulations 2006 (amended). Section 444 of the education act 1996). "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence." A pupil's Unauthorised Absence is an offence for the **parent**.

Process for requesting leave of absence.

The 2006 School Attendance Regulations make it clear that a Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.

*We will consider requests for leave of absence to take part in a regulated performance or employment, when supported by a licence issued by a local authority, as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a pupil's education (**school information – new code C1**).*

Only in an exceptional circumstance will term time leave be considered. All leave is granted at the Headteacher's discretion. Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence need to complete an application form well in advance and before booking tickets or making travel arrangements. Forms are available directly from the school office. Informing the school verbally is not the same as submitting an application form.

You will be asked to provide the following information:

- Evidence supporting the reason for the pupil's absence. *
- The address/es at which the pupil will be staying.
- The details and contact information of the adult responsible for the pupil's care while they are staying at this address/these addresses and their relationship to the child.
- An evidenced return date confirming your intention to return within a reasonable time (travel documents such as flight tickets would be suitable). If you are unable to provide an evidenced return date a reason for this must be provided along with any available evidence supporting this statement.

*It is the parent's responsibility to provide this evidence. The school are not responsible for finding this information and are not obliged to accept the evidence you provide if it is not believed to be sufficient.

If a child goes abroad during a school holiday period, the parent must make definite arrangements so that they return in good time for school re-opening. Term dates can be found [here](#). Absence claimed as illness before or after a school holiday must be reported during the period of absence and medical evidence produced on return to school. Otherwise, the absence will be regarded as unauthorised leave.

A school cannot grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence will not be granted. If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised, and you may be liable for a Fixed-Penalty Notice. Where a child's whereabouts cannot be established, they may be regarded as a 'Child Missing Education' and their place cannot be guaranteed.

If you experience unexpected delays in returning from a trip abroad or within the UK, for whatever reason, the school will require documentary evidence accompanied with proof of original return dates i.e., tickets or an official travel plan showing intent to return on time. Medical documentation should be in English. In certain circumstances, if a child remains abroad at the beginning of a school term and absence is extended, their school place may be at risk.

National Threshold for Fixed Penalty Notices

Since August 2024, the Department for Education has made clear that all state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. **The threshold is 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The school day is split into two sessions – one session counts as a**

morning or afternoon spent in school. [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\).](#)

If your child meets this threshold, you will be informed by an email from the school office.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

[Ealing School Attendance Fixed Penalty Notice Protocol](#)

[Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know – The Education Hub](#)

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. See [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) (Pg.56 National framework for penalty notices).

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than at the end of Nursery or Year 6/ Year 11) parents must provide the following information:

- The pupil's new address if they are moving.
- The details of the parent they will be living with, or of the appropriate adult who will be caring for them if they will not be living with a parent.
- Details of the school they will attend if already established, or confirmation of school applications if not yet determined.
- Travel documents if the pupil is moving outside of the UK.

It is easiest to provide all this information by completing a leaver's form. The form can be requested the school office and will be provided as a hard copy or sent to you by email to complete.

For children leaving school with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the school will notify the Ealing SEND team. (Children with EHCP's in a special school, cannot be removed from roll without permission from the Ealing SEND team). Transitions to other schools for those with EHCPs are managed through the annual review process.

When a pupil leaves and we do not have information about where they have gone/will be educated, then they are a 'Child Missing Education'. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service (formerly Social Services), the Police, benefits/council tax records and other agencies, to try to locate your child. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Withdrawals

Parents who remain resident locally can only withdraw their children from school if they have a confirmed start date at another school or are undertaking to educate the child at home (Elective Home Education). If the latter, this should be confirmed in writing and parents will be required to complete an EHE consideration form. Pupils remain registered at school until such conditions are satisfied.

[Elective home education \(EHE\)](#)

Pupils with EHCPs

All pupils with an EHCP who are being withdrawn to be Home Educated, must have the approval of the Ealing SEND team.

Data and monitoring:

Registers are taken for the AM and PM session.

The following codes are used to record pupil attendance.

Attendance and absence codes (DfE, 2024) can be found here: [Department for Education Guidance 2024](#)

The Department for Education expects schools to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe. Further, to facilitate timely collaborative working across partners, all schools are also legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority (DfE, 2024).

The school internally tracks pupils considered persistent absentees on a spreadsheet to monitor improvement or decline in attendance on a weekly basis. This information can then be used to identify which families to arrange meetings with. Letters are also sent out to recognise improvements made in attendance.

Legislation and guidance

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Resources for families | Children's Commissioner for England \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)

[School attendance and absence: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)