

Woodside Group
Learner Attendance Policy

Owned by:	Executive HT	
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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all learners
- Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every learner 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 understand and remove barriers to attendance
- Ensuring our school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance, Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools, and School attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (learner Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010
- Part 3 of The Independent School Schools Standards

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Mental health issues affecting a learner's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2026 State-funded Schools Inspection Toolkit

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Proprietor/COO/Executive Headteacher

is responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy meets the expectations outlined in the DfE's statutory guidance, and is published and publicised regularly so that it is easily accessible to learners, parents/carers and staff
- Actively supporting and prioritising attendance improvement, and working together with school leaders to establish a whole school attendance culture
- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, learners and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority (LA)
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific learners, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Recognising that improving a learner's attendance is part of improving the learner's overall welfare. This can be achieved by prioritising attendance in strategies around attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs (SEN) support, supporting learners with medical needs or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing and support for disadvantaged learners
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for learners who need it most by prioritising staff and resources, including ensuring the school engages and works effectively with the LA school attendance support team and wider local partners and services
- Making sure high aspirations are maintained for all learners, but that processes and support are adapted to the individual needs of particular learners including:
  - Those with long-term illnesses, or special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
  - learners with a social worker
  - learners who are young carers
  - learners from cohorts with historically lower attendance (e.g. those eligible for free school meals)
- Regularly reviewing, discussing and challenging attendance data and trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual learners or cohorts who need it most
- Repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to ensure they are meeting the needs of learners as experiences and barriers to attendance evolve
- Regularly reviewing attendance data at governing body meetings including a thorough examination of recent and historic trends at a school level, as well as benchmarking to comparator schools within the local authority area, region and nationwide
- Paying particular attention to attendance of learner cohorts within the school that have historically had poor attendance or that face entrenched barriers to attendance based on the school's specific context
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance, and providing support and challenge around delivering against those focus areas
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting learners' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance, which is evaluated and reviewed regularly

- Making sure training on attendance is included in the school's continued professional development offer for all staff so that, as a minimum, all staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances
  - The law and requirements of the school, including on the keeping of registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance
  - The processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to learners who need it
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. This will also include:
  - The skills needed to interpret and analyse attendance data
  - Any additional training that would be beneficial to support learners and learner cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance
- Making sure, as part of staff induction, that staff are aware of the school's safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods
- Make sure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place to respond to children absent from education, repeated absence and prolonged absence
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Woodside Group Senior management team
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual learners
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents/carers of learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for learners with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where learners with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a learner with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the learner's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to learners and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - Notifying the local authority when a learner's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
  - Providing the local authority with the details of learners who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
  - Providing the local authority with the details of learners who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with learners, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed, including to explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with learners and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to learners and families

The designated senior leader for attendance will participate in regular 'targeting support meetings' with the local authority school attendance support team to review data, discuss and agree multi-agency action plans for persistently and severely absent learners.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the head of base/headteacher (where appropriate) and can be contacted via telephone number on 01509 415474

3.4 Head of Base/Headteachers

Head of Base/headteachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1)

3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the head of base/headteacher where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

3.6 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time
- Contact the school to report their child's absence and explain the reason for the absence before 8.30 am 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
- Work together with the school to achieve high attendance, including attending meetings with the school to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Keep to any attendance contracts/plans that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting headteacher/head of base who can be contacted via telephone on 01509 415474

3.7 learners

learners are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all learners on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session, usually at the start. The attendance register will be taken at the same time for all learners and kept open for a maximum of 30 minutes. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (learner Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every learner is:

- Present at the school
- Attending a place other than school
- Absent – leave of absence
- Absent – other authorised reasons
- Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause
- Absent – unauthorised absence

The attendance register is a record of the learner's presence at the time it was taken. It will only routinely be amended if the reason for absence isn't known at the time it is taken, and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. 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 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, where a learner is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a learner is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

The school day starts at 9.00 am and ends at 15.10.

Learners must arrive in school by 9.00 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.15 am and will be kept open until 9.45 am after which the learner will be recorded as absent. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.00 pm and will be kept open until 13.30 pm after which the learner will be recorded as absent.

For learners attending alternative provision (AP), the school will verify attendance daily with the provider and review placement safety and attendance at least half-termly.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The learner's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30 or as soon as practically possible, by contacting the school admin/office/ Head of Base or Family Support Worker.

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

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

4.3 Planned absence

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

Where possible, the learner should:

- Be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, and attend school before/after their appointment

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible.

The learner's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A learner 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

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the learner's parent(s) on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the learner's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit to check on the welfare of the learner.
- 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 learner was absent

- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the learner's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the learner and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the learner needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with and the absence exceeds 10 days the school may issue a notice to improve, penalty notice and /or call an emergency annual review of the EHCP to discuss the viability of the placement with the parent/carers and local authority.
- Repeated or prolonged unexplained absences will be treated as a potential safeguarding issue and reported to the local authority safeguarding team.

The school recognises that children missing education are at significant risk of underachievement, abuse, neglect, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE) and other safeguarding concerns. The school will:

- Take all reasonable steps to identify learners at risk of becoming children missing education
- Investigate unexplained absence
- Undertake appropriate welfare enquiries
- Work with the local authority and other agencies
- Comply with statutory learner registration requirements
- Ensure that no learner is removed from the school roll unless the lawful grounds for deletion are met and all required notifications have been made

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see the definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via twice yearly reports and parents evening events.

5. Authorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a learner during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment (paid or unpaid) abroad
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Study leave for a public examination
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the learner is authorised to be absent for.

Due to the nature of ASD, we understand that holidays can often be very difficult for parents to arrange and learners to access, particularly at peak times of the year. At the discretion of the Headteacher, up to 5 school days family holiday can be taken in term time where the learner's attendance is above 90% for the previous academic year, which will be registered as an Authorised Absence: any subsequent days will be registered as

Unauthorised Absence. Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to withdraw students for a holiday and in law have to apply for permission in advance. Parents must complete the appropriate 'Leave of Absence' form and return this completed at least 2 weeks prior to the holiday, and preferably prior to booking the holiday. Parents/carers should attach a letter if there are exceptional circumstances for the request being made.

In very exceptional circumstances, and if it is in the learner's best interests, a temporary part-time timetable may be arranged. For example, if a medical condition prevents a learner from attending school or another setting full-time.

Any part-time timetable in use will be short term and have a defined end point. Plans for supporting a learner's return to full-time education will be clear and appropriate.

Part-time timetables will not be used to manage a learner's behaviour.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

- Medical emergencies/ medical recovery, mental health distress, or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) considerations (such as avoiding severe sensory overload or burnout)
- Family emergencies (e.g. death of a relative)

Leave of absence will not be granted for a learner to take part in protest activity during school hours.

Leave of absence will not be granted at the beginning of school terms, during formal assessments/exams i.e. Term 6 or where the child is persistently absent, including because of ill health (an attendance of less than 90%).

The school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent/carer does not apply in advance, a leave of absence will not be granted.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The school will not apply a blanket policy or automatic approval/refusal.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and the request should be emailed directly to the headteacher.

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

Holidays taken without the school's permission, or failure to return on the agreed date, will mean that the absence is unauthorized. The deliberate taking of a holiday in term time without or against school permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not or would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term, may result in parents being liable to a penalty notice.

If a learner fails to return within ten school days of the agreed return date, and if there is not a good reason for this absence, the school, in discussion with the local authority, may call for an emergency annual review to end placement.

5.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 learner's parent(s) belong(s)
- The school considers 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' to be a day when the learner's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment

- If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance. Learners should attend school on the days surrounding those set apart for religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a learner is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the learner is travelling with them. In these circumstances, a learner will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the learner is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

5.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

The headteacher will allow learners to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the learner is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the learner not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, because the school premises are closed
- Where the learner is in criminal justice detention, because of public health guidance or law, or because of any other unavoidable cause

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our learners to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, learners need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and not just penalise learners for poor attendance.

At Woodside this is done through positive reinforcement during weekly review meetings and the use of awesome points.

7. Supporting learners with poor attendance

The school will always work with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or the support is not engaged with, our school will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

The school will make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on penalty notices or prosecution. The school will decide whether to use each legal intervention after considering the individual family circumstances.

7.1 Attendance plans

We use attendance plans as a form of attendance support.

An attendance plan is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular attendance at school. An attendance plan is not legally binding, but it provides a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate.

Parents cannot be compelled to enter into an attendance plan, and the school cannot agree to an attendance plan in a parent's absence.

Where an attendance plan would be an appropriate form of support, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent (and learner if appropriate) to explain the purpose of an attendance plan and why using one would be beneficial in the family's circumstances. The parent will be asked to outline their views on the learner's attendance, any underlying issues and how they believe these should be addressed. The meeting will allow them to share their views on the idea of an attendance plan and what type of support they think would be helpful.

Where a parent fails to attend the meeting without good reason or notification, further attempts will be made to contact them and arrange another meeting.

Where parents/learners fail to comply with an agreed attendance plan, the school may seek an alternative course of action. In the first instance, this will include discussions with the parent(s)/learner to seek explanations and determine whether the attendance plan remains useful.

If a parent/learner cannot comply with the attendance plan through no fault of their own, a meeting will be arranged with them to review and adjust it. If the parent fails to engage without a valid reason, the school will issue a warning that the plan may be terminated and alternative action taken.

If there are further instances of non-compliance, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent to review the attendance plan and discuss how it can be made to work. Following this meeting, the school will decide whether the non-compliance is undermining the plan to the extent that it is no longer useful, in which case an alternative course of action will be decided upon.

The school will keep a record of its decision-making and any non-compliance by the parent/learner in respect of the attendance plan.

7.2 Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans and attendance plans have been unsuccessful, we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and will set up a meeting.

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but **not** a criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be guilty of an offence. The local authority can prosecute for persistent non-compliance with the order, and parents will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000, upon conviction.

7.3 Notice to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

The national threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least 1 school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence. These sessions can be consecutive or not. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.

A notice to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the learner attends school.

It will include:

- Details of the learner's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered, if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

7.4 Penalty notices

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided and the national threshold has been reached.

The headteacher, local authority or the police can issue a penalty notice in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, and the Local Codes of Conduct maintained by the local authority.

Penalty notices will 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. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

If the school issues a penalty notice, we will check with the local authority before doing so, and send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued.

The school will consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where a learner reaches the national threshold. We do not have a blanket rule for issuing or not issuing penalty notices.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that learner and change parent behaviour for the particular family
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the learner's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same learner, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the learner must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process in the case of repeat offences for non-attendance.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

8. Supporting learners who are absent or returning to school

8.1 learners absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the learner's needs, we will inform the local authority.

Where a parent expresses an intention to educate a child at home, the school will meet with the parent and any relevant professionals before a final decision is made to ensure that the best interests of the child have been considered.

8.2 learners absent due to mental or physical ill health

The school maintains high expectations for all learners. For those facing complex barriers, including learners with SEND or long-term health conditions, appropriate additional support will be provided to secure regular attendance.

In cases of both long-term physical or mental ill health, the school will:

- Facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible while supporting the underlying health issue
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of learners who are struggling to attend school, as well as making reasonable adjustments where a learner has a disability
- Consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate
- Make a sickness return to the local authority if a learner is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the learner will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness, or the learner's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days

Where a learner has special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) the school will:

- Work in partnership with the parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the learner's education, health and care (EHC) plan is accessed
- Work in partnership with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these learners face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of learners who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments where a learner has a disability
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate

In some cases, the school will not be able to fully support a learner without the assistance of a range of other agencies. The school will:

- Make use of school nursing services and mental health support teams where they are available
- Consider whether additional support from other external partners (including the local authority, children and young people's mental health services, GPs or other health services) would be appropriate and make referrals
- Where external support is provided, work together with those services to deliver any subsequent support

If a learner has an education health and care (EHC) plan, the school will:

- Communicate with the local authority if a learner's attendance falls or they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to a learner's needs
- Where possible, agree adjustments to its policies and practices that are consistent with the special educational provision set out in the education health and care (EHC) plan in collaboration with the parents
- Where needed, work with the local authority to review and amend the education health and care (EHC) plan to incorporate the additional or different attendance support identified

Parents should consult the NHS guidance Is my child too ill for school? when deciding whether to keep their child home due to illness. We will share this guidance with parents, and provide support in understanding it, in order to promote school attendance wherever appropriate.

8.3 learners absent due to other barriers to attendance

Set out your approach towards learners absent from school due to:

- Having SEND
- Being disadvantaged
- Being known (or previously known) to local authority children's social care
- Having other barriers to attendance (e.g. young carers)

Part of Ofsted's criteria for 'expected standard' for attendance and behaviour says that any reasonable adjustments and/or interventions should be timely and appropriate, well-chosen and targeted.

Where a learner has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, the school will inform the local authority.

8.4 learners returning to school after a period of absence

• It is important that on return from an absence that all learners are made to feel welcome.

• This should include ensuring that the learner is helped to adjust to the school's daily routine, catch up on any missed work, and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other learners.

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance and analysing attendance data

The school will monitor and analyse weekly attendance and punctuality data to identify emerging trends across cohorts, year groups and individual learners. This will enable early identification of attendance concerns and the delivery of targeted support.

Regular individual attendance analysis will be carried out to identify learners needing early support across all absence levels, including persistent and severe, and deliver targeted intervention before absence patterns become embedded.

The school will conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This will include analysis of:

- learners and cohorts, and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes
- Days of poor attendance and, where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance and engagement

When analysing patterns the school will look further into patterns of attendance within a session to ensure all learners are attending all timetabled lessons.

The school will:

- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include learners in a year group with higher than average absence or learners eligible for free school meals if their attendance falls behind that of their more advantaged peers
- Monitor the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented or specific cohorts that we have sought to target. The findings will be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies
- Record young carers in the school census and, where a learner's caring role may be contributing to absence, the school will work in partnership with the learner and their parents to understand barriers to attendance and to put appropriate support in place. Where needs extend beyond the school gates, the school will work with the local authority to facilitate access to support through local early help arrangements and other relevant organisations
- Ensure data is regularly monitored for learners with long term illnesses and/or special educational needs and/or disabilities including governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide data and reports to the Woodside Group Senior management team

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual learner, year group and cohort level.

Specific learner information will be shared with the DfE on request.

9.2 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual learners, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the learners we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 9.3 below)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a learner's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific learners, where appropriate
- Work with parents, the Virtual School Head and any other relevant professionals to monitor and support the attendance of disadvantaged learners, those with SEND, learners known or previously known to children's social care, and learners who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing

To facilitate timely collaborative working across partners, the school will share information from its registers with the local authority. This will include:

- New learner and Deletion returns

- Attendance returns
- Sickness returns

Where a learner has a social worker and/or youth offending team worker, the school will inform the social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school.

9.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a learner misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a learner misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of the school's regular data monitoring and identify learners and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. If all avenues of support have been facilitated and the appropriate educational support or placements have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. The school will be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of learners who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Work together with the local authority to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage the learner
- The school will sensitively explore the reasons for absence, recognising school as a safe, supportive space and prioritising early help over immediate sanctions
- The school will prioritise support for severely absent learners. Where necessary to remove barriers to attendance, this will include tailored attendance strategies, and whole-family interventions.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum on a yearly basis by The Executive Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Woodside Group Senior management team

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting learners with medical conditions
- SEN Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	learner is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	learner is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	learner arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	learner is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	learner is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	learner is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	learner is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	learner is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	learner is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	learner is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	learner is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	learner has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	learner has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	learner of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	learner is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	learner has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	learner is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	learner is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	learner is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	learner has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	learner is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	learner is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	learner is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	learner is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every learner absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	learner is unable to attend as they are: ● In police detention

		• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	learner's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	learner is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	learner has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective learner not on admission register	learner has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays