The Woodland Federation of Peak District Schools

Attendance Policy

In designing and implementing policies, the school aims to demonstrate its positive approach to inclusion.

Introduction and background

The Woodland Federation of Peak District Schools recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children’s welfare and safeguarding.
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled.
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school in preparation for secondary education.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil’s absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child’s regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody’s responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents details on attendance in our newsletters.
- Report to parents annually on how their child’s attendance by means of the annual school report.
- Contact parents should their child’s attendance fall below acceptable levels.

Understanding types of absence
Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason. Good reasons are defined as:

- where the child is too ill to attend school*
- where medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time (parents should make every effort to make appointments out of school time)
- when the absence occurs on a day set aside for religious observance to which the parents belong
- when there are extreme weather conditions and it is not safe or possible to travel to school
- when there has been a family bereavement (but this should be for a very limited period of time e.g. 1 or 2 days)
- where the pupil lives more than 3 miles from school with no suitable transport, up to a maximum of five days with the authorisation of the headteacher.

*Children who have a high level of illness throughout the year, and fall below the 90% attendance figure may be referred to the school doctor or nurse in order to help with any health needs or issues that prevent the child from attending school.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider exceptional and for which no ‘leave’ has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- shopping
- looking after other children
- birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem.

**Persistent Absenteeism**

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss up to 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s education and we need full parental support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. You will be informed if your child’s absence is nearing 90% you will be informed and invited in to school to discuss the matter. If the figure goes below 90% the matter can be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. This information may also be used when pupils’ progress is tracked as absence can affect attainment.
Absence Procedures

- Class teachers record attendance on weekly registration sheet at the beginning of each session am and pm.
- Peak Forest Primary - Pupils arriving after 8.50am will be recorded as arriving late. Pupils arriving after 9.05am will be marked with a ‘U’ in the register which is classed as an absence.
- Great Hucklow Primary - Pupils arriving after 9.00am will be recorded as arriving late. Pupils arriving after 9.15am will be marked with a ‘U’ in the register which is classed as an absence.
- Late entries are monitored and parents will be contacted where these are unacceptably high.
- Parents must contact the school office before 9.10am on the first morning of any absence and each day thereafter. We will contact you if we haven’t heard from you.
- School will monitor attendance and punctuality.
- If poor attendance continues, or measures have not been taken to improve the situation, parents may be asked to attend an attendance panel held in school.

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher preparing for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at 8.50am at Peak Forest and 9.00am at Great Hucklow.
- Registers are marked immediately and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. If they arrive after 9.15am they will receive a ‘U’ in the register (late after the register has closed) which is classed an absence.
If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good punctuality.

**Leave of Absence in Term Time**

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

These may include (illustrative examples only):
- family holiday when a family member is critically ill
- a family wedding at which the pupil has a role e.g. bridesmaid or page boy

Any requests should be on an official school absence request form and handed into the school office for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made. Evidence to support the application must be submitted and will be photocopied and held on record.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised.

This policy has been approved by the school’s Governing Body on 03/12/2018 and is subject to annual review.