



Wood Ley Community Primary School



ATTENDANCE POLICY



Policy Owner	Headteacher
Approved By	Full Governing Body
Effective From	September 2026
Review Cycle	Annual
Next review Date	September 2027

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school, is:

Mrs S Renwick
01449616038

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Mrs Hayley Green / Mrs G Tierney
admin@woodley.suffolk.sch.uk
01449616038

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more individual support with attendance

Mrs S Renwick
01449616038

The governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is:

Mrs C Trussell
01449616038

Wood Ley Community Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy 2026-2027

Introduction and Background

Wood Ley C P School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities: “Working together to improve school attendance”. The guidance is statutory and was updated in July 2026. It sets out expectations for promoting attendance, supporting pupils and families, using attendance data, maintaining attendance and admission registers, and using legal intervention where support is unsuccessful, not engaged with or not appropriate. This policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

[Working together to improve school attendance](#)

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and 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;
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

It has been developed with regard to DfE statutory guidance and in consultation with school governors, staff and the Local Authority. It sets out the responsibilities of those involved and the procedures used to promote, support and monitor pupil attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE’s statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

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. **It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the *headteacher*, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

Promoting Regular Attendance

At Wood Ley C P School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion (the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school) is:

Mrs S Renwick
01449 616038

The governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is:

Mrs C Trussell
C/O admin@woodley.suffolk.sch.uk

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department for Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters;
- Promote the benefits of high attendance;
- Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law;

- Recognise and encourage positive attendance habits and improvements in attendance, taking account of individual circumstances and avoiding approaches that disadvantage pupils whose absence is unavoidable or related to additional needs;
- Use positive, inclusive approaches to promote belonging, punctuality and regular attendance;
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress;
- Monitor attendance regularly and contact families where emerging patterns, declining attendance or punctuality give cause for concern, with particular attention to pupils approaching or meeting the persistent absence threshold.

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late 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 allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a reason that the school is permitted to authorise, such as illness, unavoidable medical or dental appointments, emergencies or other circumstances provided for in the attendance regulations. The school will not routinely request medical evidence for ordinary short-term illness. Where there are genuine concerns about the authenticity or frequency of illness-related absence, the school may seek appropriate supporting information and will work sensitively with the family.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session;
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- day trips;

- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this. A pupil is considered persistently absent when they have missed 10% or more of their possible school sessions.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**'. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

Absence Procedures

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day to day basis is:

Mrs Hayley Green / Mrs Geraldine Tierney

admin@woodley.suffolk.sch.uk

01449 616038

We monitor and review all pupils' absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9:20am, when our register closes;
- **Log absence on Parentmail**
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Please be aware that, if you leave a voicemail to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised;
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9:20am;
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as they are well enough to attend. The school will not routinely request medical evidence for ordinary short-term illness. Where there are genuine concerns about repeated or prolonged illness-related absence, we may ask for appropriate supporting information and will work with families and relevant professionals to understand and address barriers to attendance.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding;

Where attendance concerns emerge or absence continues, we will follow a graduated approach:

- Monitor patterns and contact you early where attendance is declining, absence is becoming persistent, or punctuality is causing concern;
- Listen to and understand the barriers affecting attendance and, where appropriate, arrange a meeting with Mrs Renwick or another relevant member of staff;
- Work with you and your child to facilitate appropriate support. Where needed, we may formalise this support through an attendance contract or other personalised plan that identifies barriers, agreed actions, review arrangements and each person's role;
- Involve or signpost to other services and professionals where this would help to remove barriers to attendance;
- Where support is unsuccessful, is not engaged with, or is not appropriate, consider formal attendance intervention and referral to the Local Authority in line with the National Framework and Suffolk procedures.

Lateness

Regular and punctual attendance helps children to feel settled, ready to learn and fully included in school life. Good time-keeping is also an important life skill. We will work with families where persistent lateness indicates that additional support may be needed.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Wood Ley C P School are:

Gates open: 8:40am

Registration starts: 8:50am

Registration closes: 9:20am

End of the school day: 3:20pm

How we manage lateness:

- The school gates open at 8:40am;
- The school day begins and registers are taken at 8:50am;
- Children arriving after the gate has closed at 8:50**am** are required to come into school via the school office. If accompanied by a parent/carers they must sign the late slip and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded; and shared at attendance committee meetings.
- At 9:20**am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence;
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns;
- A member of school staff will undertake a 'Meet & Greet' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school.

Repeated late arrival after the register has closed will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may contribute towards the national threshold for consideration of a penalty notice or other attendance intervention.

If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with Mrs Renwick , but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved 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 and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These may include pupils with long-term medical conditions, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), mental health or emotionally based barriers, children with a social worker, looked-after or previously looked-after children, young carers and pupils experiencing other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place, but the school will not adopt a “one size fits all” approach. We will consider individual needs and circumstances, make reasonable adjustments where appropriate, and work with families, the SENDCo, health professionals, social care, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies to remove barriers and support improved attendance.

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more detailed support on attendance:

Name: Mrs S Renwick
01449 616038

Local Authority attendance support services

The Local Authority Attendance Team work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absences and improve overall attendance.

We expect parents and carers to work with the school and Local Authority to address attendance concerns and to engage with appropriate support. Our first priority is to understand barriers and work together to improve attendance. Where voluntary support is unsuccessful, not engaged with or not appropriate, the school and Local Authority may consider formal support and/or legal intervention in accordance with statutory guidance.

School Attendance and the Law

In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act

1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered: 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions do not have to be consecutive and may include a combination of relevant unauthorised absence codes. The 10-school-week period may span different terms, school years or education settings.

Notice to Improve

Where the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but offers of support have not been engaged with or have not resulted in sufficient improvement, a Notice to Improve may be issued as a final opportunity to engage with support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered. A Notice to Improve is not required in every case; for example, where support is not appropriate. Decisions will be made in accordance with the National Framework and Suffolk procedures.

For a first penalty notice, the fine is £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days. A second penalty notice for the same parent and pupil within a three-year period is £160, payable within 28 days. A maximum of two penalty notices may normally be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within a rolling three-year period. If the national threshold is met for a third time within that period, alternative legal intervention may be considered by the Local Authority. Court proceedings can result in a fine of up to £2,500, a community order and/or imprisonment for up to three months in the most serious cases.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours.

In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances".

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Headteacher or a person authorised by the Headteacher may grant a leave of absence. All applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Suffolk Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

At Wood Ley C P School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation an exceptional circumstance

The headteacher/school may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

Where the headteacher/school believes a penalty notice would be appropriate in an individual case, the local authority retains the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met.

Admission Register, Deletion from Roll and Children Missing Education

For any pupil leaving Wood Ley C P School, *other than at the end of year 6*, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from school' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.

The school will maintain the admission register and make additions and deletions only in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. We will notify Suffolk County Council of relevant additions and deletions within the required timescales and work with the Local Authority in accordance with the statutory Children Missing Education guidance. Where a pupil's destination is unknown or there are concerns that a child may be missing education, the school will follow safeguarding and Children Missing Education procedures and will not remove the pupil from roll unless a lawful ground for deletion has been met.

Absence data

We use attendance data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils and groups where attendance is declining or needs to improve. The school submits attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis in accordance with statutory requirements. Persistently and severely absent pupils, and pupils at risk of becoming so, are tracked carefully. Attendance information is considered alongside safeguarding, SEND, wellbeing and attainment information so that support can be targeted appropriately.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Further information

DfE: Working together to improve school attendance (statutory guidance, updated July 2026)

School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

DfE: Children missing education (statutory guidance, updated September 2025)

DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Suffolk County Council: current Code of Conduct for penalty notices for school attendance

DfE: Communicating with parents about school attendance (June 2026)