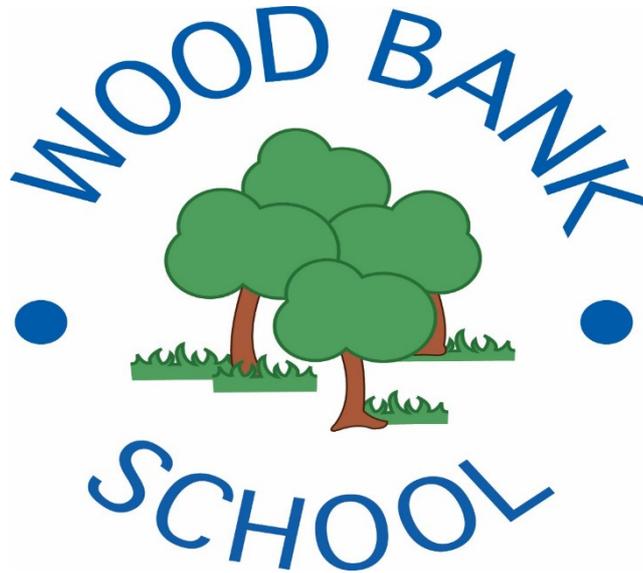


WOOD BANK SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Ratification	January 2017
Review Date	January 2020
Signed (Headteacher)	
Signed (Chair of Governors)	

Equality Statement

At Wood Bank School we intend to provide a safe, secure, caring environment where everyone is valued and respected equally. We aim to provide an inclusive education where children develop independent learning skills and are taught according to need whatever their age, gender, background, beliefs or abilities. National legislation re disabilities, race relations and special education needs underpin this policy, which has also taken into consideration national, local and school policies on Special Educational Needs, Gifted and Talented, Equal Opportunities and Health and Safety.

Philosophy

Here at Wood Bank we are dedicated staff team who strive to ensure all our pupil's learn and achieve to the best of their ability. Our aim is to work holistically and in partnership with families to support them in ensuring their children are happy and thrive at school and at home.

Procedures/Practice

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Education Act 1996 requires:

- Parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- Schools are responsible for recording pupil's attendance twice a day
- An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the School's admission register.
- Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence.

PARENTS/CARERS REQUIREMENTS

- Ensure that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly
- **Phone the school office before 9.30am on the first day of absence to report the reason**
- Keep requests for their child to be absent for any reason to a minimum
- Ensure that their child returns to school following a medical appointment whenever possible
- Apply to the Head Teacher for any leave of absence that falls outside the normal authorised absences
- Contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school

SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

- Promote pupils' learning and achievements
- School to publish its attendance figures to parents and to promote attendance e.g on the Newsletter
- Increase levels of attendance throughout the school
- Meet the legal requirements set out by the Government policy
- Promote a positive attitude to attendance and punctuality
- Reward good attendance and improved attendance
- Consistently record authorised and unauthorised absence
- Monitor and challenge extended or repeated patterns of absence
- Contact Educational Welfare Officer or Social Services as appropriate
- In the case of long term, absence due to accident or illness, to provide an appropriate educational programme that may be delivered in the home setting

AIM

- Government guidelines state that 95% attendance is average attendance for a primary school aged pupil
- 85% attendance or below is classed as a persistent absentee (PA)
- A child who has 10 days absences in an academic year can achieve a maximum of 94.7% attendance, assuming there is no additional absences.
- However as a Special Needs School we take into account and accommodate for the wide range of all our pupil's conditions and medical needs.
- In light of this we have created Individual Thresholds of attendance for all pupils. This is to ensure that each child is seen as an individual, and their health needs are taken into consideration. The Individual Attendance Threshold Plans, along with an Attendance Support Plan are for families who may need support with their child's attendance. As it's our aim to work in partnership with parents to resolve any problems relating to attendance.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

An Authorised Absence is when school have accepted the reasons for absence as legitimate and there are no grounds for the local authority to consider the appropriateness of prosecution.

Absences can only be authorised by the school when permission has been given in advance for a pupil to be absent or an explanation for absence has been accepted afterwards.

Acceptable reasons for absence include:

- Illness
- Illness with a risk to others e.g. infection
- Sent home from school due to illness
- Exceptional family circumstance e.g. bereavement

- Medical/dental appointments which cannot be made out of school time
- Taking part in special tuition outside of the school
- Religious observance
- Exclusion

Notice of request for leave needs to be handed to the Head Teacher at least 4 weeks before. Request forms are available from the school office.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Unauthorised Absence is '*unacceptable reasons in which the school cannot approve pupil leave*'

Unacceptable reasons for absence include:

- The explanation provided by parent/carer is deemed insufficient
- Unexplained absence
- Truancy
- Shopping
- Visiting friends or relatives
- Holidays
- A persistent/ recurring illness where medical advice has not been sought

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

- 2006 regulations remove reference to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. In light of these changes we are unable to authorise absence for holidays taken in term time apart from in **exceptional circumstances**. This has to be discussed and approved by the Head Teacher, who may seek further advice from the schools Education Welfare Officer.
- If Parents remove their child for unauthorised leave the Head Teacher may ask the Education Welfare Service to issue a penalty notice, under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, which carries a fine of £50 to £100 per parent, per child. Non payment of the penalty notice could result in prosecution

EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICE

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) works to support all schools to reduce persistent and unauthorised absentee levels in accordance with DFE expectations and thresholds. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the Local Authority and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers; it may take legal action if parents fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly and there is no legitimate reason for the absence (under section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

The action might take one of two forms:

- The issuing of a Penalty Notice (a fine, issued by Calderdale EWS, for a child's unauthorised absence from school) the cost of the penalty is £120 - if paid within 21 days it is reduced to £60.
- Prosecution in the local Magistrates Court. The court fine the parents and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), as Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

We understand that our Pupils may have appointments within school hours. Where possible we would advise for parents/carers to try and arrange for a time outside of the school hours to ensure your child isn't missing valuable learning time.

If it's unavoidable to attend a medical appointment within school hours, we advise trying to get an am or pm appointment where your child can still attend half a day of school so they are not missing out on a full day of learning.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Occasionally Exceptional Circumstances can result in absence this includes:

- Close Family bereavement
- Extended periods in hospital
- Unforeseen change to family circumstances due to an emergency
- Religious celebrations that may fall outside of the term time period
- School closed due to unavoidable cause or circumstance
- Transport provided by the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not in walking distance.
- Extreme Weather conditions make it unsafe for children to get into school

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

School treats absence due to religious observance (outside of schools normal school holidays) as an authorised absence. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the family belong. Where necessary schools may seek advice from the family's religious body to confirm the dates.

Responsibilities for Leading, Monitoring & Evaluating

- Our Family Liaison Officer is responsible for monitoring Pupil Attendance across the school, instigating appropriate interventions and reporting back to the Senior Leadership Team, Governors and where appropriate the Education Welfare Service.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING THRESHOLDS

Thresholds of attendance (%)	The following are suggested actions at each threshold:
100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Reward improved and regular attendance –termly, Certificates, stickers for children❖ Thank you/ well done letters to parents.
95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Pupils with attendance at, or below 95%❖ For each absence, a designated member of staff makes a telephone call to the family home as early in the day as possible.❖ Unless a satisfactory explanation has been received, a letter is sent to the parent regretting the absence and asking for an explanation for every session missed.
90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Pupils deteriorating to 90% (equivalent to one session missed per week)❖ Make first day calls as above.❖ Send a standard letter to parent pointing out the deterioration in attendance levels.❖ Remind the parent of the school's target levels for attendance and the negative effect of irregular attendance on learning. Require the parent to provide an explanation and comments.❖ Keep in contact with parents on a weekly basis. Provide encouragement where improvement has been made.❖ Refer to Calderdale Education Welfare office.❖ Monitor weekly attendance where

	attendance does not improve
<p style="text-align: center;">85% Persistent Absentee (PA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Pupils deteriorating to 85% (equivalent to 1.5 sessions missed per week on average – the persistent absence threshold from July 2011) ❖ Ask parents to attend a meeting in school with Family Liaison Officer ❖ Warn of likelihood of referral to the Local Authority Attendance Service unless improvement is made. ❖ Reach agreements for rapid improvements over the next half term. ❖ Remind the parent that full attendance is the aim and that anything less than 95% will cause concern. ❖ Consider using a parenting contract between school and parent. ❖ Look at putting an Attendance Support Plan in place ❖ Monitor attendance very closely and keep in weekly contact with the parent, either to praise attendance levels or to show ongoing concern. Referral to the School Attendance Officer should be considered at this stage.
<p style="text-align: center;">80% Persistent Absentee (PA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Pupils deteriorating to 80% (equivalent to one day or two sessions missed per week) ❖ Maintain the approaches set out at the previous thresholds. The Head teacher should be involved and should add weight to any interventions already in place. ❖ Invite parents to attend meeting in school with Head Teacher and Family Liaison Officer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Re look at current Attendance support plan with parents to improve attendance. ❖ Children in Nursery who fall below 75% risk having their funding for their place removed
80-75% If all support and interventions have proved unsuccessful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Referral to the Educational Welfare Service ❖ Or referral to social care if absence is becoming neglectful ❖ Education penalty notice/ fine

For our pupils we take into account their individual conditions and health needs, with an Individual Attendance Threshold.

INDIVIDUAL ATTENDANCE THRESHOLD PLAN

An individual Attendance Threshold Plan takes into account the individual needs of our pupils.

Pupils whose attendance is a concern will be discussed with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT);

- ❖ Each identified pupil to have an 'Individual Attendance Threshold Plan'.
- ❖ Clear and appropriate monitoring/ interventions to be put in place.
- ❖ Taking into consideration any medical conditions/ appointments
- ❖ Looking at what qualifies a satisfactory explanation and what doesn't.
- ❖ Holiday requests or circumstances
- ❖ Assess if an 'Individual Attendance Support Plan' would be appropriate to put in place

An example Individual Attendance Support Plan

<u>Pupil & Class</u>	<u>Parent/s</u>	<u>Current attendance-%</u>	<u>Attendance Goal-%</u>

<u>Action/ Support</u>	<u>By who</u>	<u>How will we know when it's been achieved</u>	<u>By when</u>	<u>Completed?</u>

Discussion: Parents views, schools views & pupil view

-
-
-

Start date:	Finish date:
Parent/s signature:	
Family Liaisons Officer signature:	
Head signature:	

REWARDS

Rewards given for good attendance and significantly improved attendance on a termly basis.

- Children will receive stickers and a personalised certificate in good work assembly
- Parents will also receive a complimentary letter and a whole family certificate
- Positive attendance Updates on the Newsletter

LETTERS

- Whole school letters
- Individual attendance letters
- Whole School Attendance leaflet

Related Legislation/Documentation/Policies

This policy relates to the following:

- School Attendance (2016)