



# The Woodside Academy

## **ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

September 2016

### **INCLUSION AND SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT:**

We are committed to creating futures for all in a welcoming and supportive learning environment, in which all pupils feel valued and challenged to be resilient thinkers, active learners with transferable skills and have an appetite for world learning.

In the Synaptic Trust all pupils are valued, inspired and respected within our happy, welcoming family.

We set high expectations for all our pupils. Practitioners give every pupil the opportunity to experience success in their learning, by providing a relevant and challenging curriculum with an emphasis on personalised learning.

All children have unique experiences to share. Across the trust we celebrate this diversity by valuing the contribution of all pupils and providing a learning environment that encourages interdependence.

Our trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting welfare of children and expects staff to share this commitment.

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### **SATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE AT THE WOODSIDE ACADEMY IS 96%**

#### **Statement of Aims**

This policy follows the guidance set out in the Croydon LA Attendance Strategy – July 2006

The school, under the 2002 Education Act and the Local Authority in the 2004 Children Act, has a duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of children. Ensuring regular attendance at school is an important part of the school improvement agenda. The school sets an annual target and the Local Authority supports the school to achieve the target and monitors performance.

The Education Act requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A positive attendance culture is best achieved when pupils, parents/carers, the school and the LA work together in partnership.

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (Where the school approves pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (Where the school will not approve absence)

As a school we will ensure that:

- Children are registered accurately and efficiently as required by law using the Department of Education approved coding.
- Parents or carers are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised
- Pupil attendance and punctuality is monitored regularly and spot checks are made.

**The named person responsible for school attendance and punctuality is Ms C Howarth.**

Children will be encouraged to:

- Attend school regularly and punctually.

We will expect parents or carers to:

- Encourage good and punctual attendance
- Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance by note, telephone or email.
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance.
- In the case of absences in exceptional circumstances taken during term time a form will be completed.

The LA, through the Education Welfare Officer, will:

- Offer support to schools, parents/carers and pupils to promote a positive attendance culture.
- Assist the school with spot checks when required
- Follow up any concerns the school may raise.

### **Completing the Register**

The marking of registers can sometimes become so routine that its importance is lost. However, incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. They may also contribute to pupils' end of term reports and to records of achievement. For these reasons registers are required to be marked in ink and not easily erased, and all alterations should be visible and explained.

It is important that the register information is correct because:

- It is a record in law of attendance
- It is the basis of a roll call should there be an emergency evacuation
- It is a legal requirement for schools to publish figures in its brochure relating to authorised and unauthorised absences.

In the Lower Primary the Attendance Register should be marked at 9.00am and 1.00pm. In the Upper Primary the Attendance Register should be marked at 8.55am and at 1.10pm (for Years 3 & 4) and 1.20pm (Year 5 & 6). A well-defined line should be made through either the 'P' or 'A' with a black pen. If an error is made a note should be attached so that the Office Staff can make the amendment.

If a child is absent at this time, this should be recorded in the register, and, if the reason for the absence is known, this should be recorded on the sheet inside the register. Absence letters should be placed inside the cover of the register.

In the Lower Primary classroom doors should be shut at and the register taken at 9.00 a.m. Children arriving in the classroom after the register has been taken should be marked as late. Children arriving after 9.00am should come into school via the main entrance where they will be registered as 'late'. If they arrive after 9.15am their names will be recorded in the 'Day Book'. The same rules apply in the Nursery.

At 9.30am the register officially closes and this will be recorded as Unauthorised Absence (U code). If necessary, the school will refer to the Education Welfare Officer, who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning, followed by a Fixed Penalty Notice.

All children who arrive or leave school for any reason after the register has been closed should report to the Office.

In the Upper Primary classroom doors should be shut at 8.55am and the register taken at 8.55 a.m. arriving after 8.55am should come into school via the main entrance where they will be registered as 'late'. If they arrive after 9.15am their names will be recorded in the 'Day Book'.

At 9.30am the register officially closes and this will be recorded as Unauthorised Absence (U code). The school will refer to the Education Welfare Officer, who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning, followed by a Fixed Penalty Notice, if necessary.

### **Absences from school in exceptional circumstances taken during term time**

It is clear that term time absence has a significant negative impact on school attendance figures as well as disadvantaging individual pupils.

As a school we stress to parents the importance of avoiding term time absences.

The Governing Body has decided that holidays during the school term will not be authorised. However in extenuating circumstances the following criteria will be applied.

Before authorising leave the Attendance Manager/Head Teacher will consider

- *The child's current attendance record, including punctuality.*
- *The child's stage of education, especially when they are in Year 2 and Year 6*
- *If previous requests have been made within the same school year.*
- *The child is achieving the expected levels of progress.*
- *If the pupil's work and conduct are of an acceptable standard.*

An application form is available from the Office. The form will be kept at the back of the register until the absence is complete, it will then be filed in the pupil's record file.

The school will normally only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances for up to 10 days in any academic year. The following criteria will be applied when considering authorisation.

- The absence is not during an 'assessment' period (normally the first half of the summer term)
- The current attendance and punctuality record of the pupil.
- Any previous requests made by the family

A reply will be sent home informing parents if the request has been authorised, part-authorised or refused.

### **Monitoring of attendance and punctuality**

The Education Welfare Officer visits the school on a regular basis to meet with the Attendance Officer and monitor attendance and punctuality.

As a school we send individual letters to pupils whose attendance and punctuality are of concern and at the end of each half term a letter will be sent to families of children whose attendance has fallen below 85% and/or those who have a record of persistent lateness.

If concerns are felt about a pupil's poor attendance, patterns of absence or punctuality, the following steps must be followed as soon as possible.

- A member of the office staff will telephone or text parents/carers on the first day of absence when we have not been notified of a valid reason for absence
- Attendance and punctuality are reviewed at termly Pupil Progress Meetings and the Headteacher contacts parents again if necessary.
- After non-attendance on 3 separate occasions a letter will be sent. After 3 lates or 2 unauthorised lates a letter will be sent.
- If there is no improvement after 10 days a letter requesting medical evidence will be sent and parents/carers made an appointment to talk to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- If medical evidence is not provided a letter from the Governors will be sent. See Appendix A.
- If no improvement after 10 days the concerns will be fast tracked to the Education Welfare Officer.
- If attendance gives the school cause for concern the parent will be contacted and asked to make an appointment to see the Headteacher. If attendance does not improve the family is referred to the Education Welfare Service.
- The family is referred to the Educational Welfare Service.
- In cases of persistent lateness or excessive non-attendance the EWS will investigate the circumstances and may recommend (i) the issuing of a fixed penalty, notice, (ii) the use of a parenting contract or in extreme cases (iii) prosecution for non school attendance.
- The week before a school holiday and the week after a school holiday a text is sent to all parents/carers requesting that any absences from school are supported by medical evidence (appointment card, prescription, empty prescribed medication container.) Failure to provide this will result in the absences being unauthorised.

Fixed Penalty Notices can be awarded for £60 - £120 in the following situations:

- 1) Unauthorised absences (5 or more sessions in 60 sessions)
- 2) Unauthorised leave in term time.
- 3) The pupil has already one recorded leave of absence (either authorised or unauthorised) during the previous 12 calendar months and a further leave of absence has been taken in term-time within 6 weeks (60 sessions).
- 4) If the pupil arrives late in school (after the register has closed) more than 5 times in a 60 session period.

### **Rewards for Good Attendance**

- Children who achieve one hundred percent attendance during each term receive an Attendance Certificate for those in Nursery – Year 3 and termly for those children in Year 3 -6. A special Attendance Award is awarded to those who achieve one hundred percent attendance over the whole school year.
- Every week the class with the best attendance is awarded a cup. The weekly percentages of each class are displayed outside the school office.
- Those children who have 100% attendance over the school year are rewarded with a trip out of school at the end of the summer term, as requested by the School Council.

### **Guidance for parents - Attendance and Punctuality**

#### **SATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE AT THE WOODSIDE ACADEMY IS 96%**

***To be sent to all parents/carers at the start of each academic year.***

We will expect parents and carers to:

- Encourage good and punctual attendance
- Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance by note or telephone
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance
- In the case of absences in exceptional circumstances taken during term time a form will be completed (available from the school office).

Regular attendance is essential for a child's development. Should a child be absent for any reason, parents should telephone the Office giving the reason for absence.

Please make every effort to plan holidays in the children's holidays to avoid interfering with the continuity of their work. Absence in exceptional circumstances can only be authorised in extreme circumstances and may not amount to more than two weeks in a school year. A form, which must be received at school at least one month before the absence, is available from the School Office.

If the application results in more than ten school days being authorised during the whole school year, any additional days may be recorded as unauthorised. The matter will then be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and may result in a Fixed Penalty Fine of £60.

Good punctuality is also important as late arrival in class can be most upsetting for the pupil and also for the rest of the class. As Early Learning starts at **8.50am** in the Lower Primary children should be in their classroom by 8.50 a.m. ready for registration. Likewise Early Learning starts at **8.45am** in the Upper Primary so please ensure your child is in promptly.

September 2016

Appendix A

New letterhead required

1<sup>st</sup> September 2016

Mr and Mrs I  
Meadvale Road  
Croydon  
Surrey  
CR0 6JW

Dear Mr and Mrs

Further to a letter sent by The Woodside Academy dated \_\_\_\_\_, it has been noted that there has not been a significant improvement in your child's attendance.

Childs name attendance is ??%, we are sure that you will agree that this is unsatisfactory. The school have now passed your child's attendance over to us to be monitored.

We will monitor your child's attendance for 10 school days. If there is no improvement the case will be fast tracked to the Educational Welfare Officer attached to the school.

Our pupils are valuable and important to us as well as to you as parents. Excessive absences could hinder a pupil's progress and the schools ability to provide for his/her educational needs. We need your help by making every effort to have your child in school every day.

**We would like to point out that it is your legal responsibility, as a parent, to ensure regular attendance. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice Fine or legal action against you in the future.**

Yours sincerely

Governor