

## Woodmancote School and Little Chestnuts Attendance Policy and Procedures

Designated Member of Staff	S Johnson and K Holder
Committee with responsibility	Safeguarding Committee
Date of Issue	February 2014
Frequency of Review	Yearly

Issue Number	Issue Date	Summary of Changes
8	September 2023	Update with notes from KCSIE 2023 and children missing education/children absent from education
9	March 2024	Updated registration times
11	October 24	Authorised absence and Legal Sanctions
12	December 2024	Reviewed, in accordance with recommendations from Inclusion Officer- Registration times The school's Attendance Champion needs to be named and include contact details Amounts for the fines and the wording to be in line with new legislation.
13	January 2025	Whole policy amended in line with GCC "Skeleton Policy" to adhere with new legislation, with the main focus being NTI and PN compliant
14	September 2025	Reviewed-No changes

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### **Aims and objectives**

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

*At Woodmancote School we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.*

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007, as amended](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

In addressing attendance at Woodmancote, school staff will also be aware and mindful of the advice in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

### Children who are absent from education

- Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child

protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Further information and support, includes:

- Guidance on school attendance 'Working together to improve school attendance' including information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.
- Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: Children Missing Education.

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## Roles and responsibilities

**Parents/carers** are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time (8.45am-3.15pm)
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am 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 one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

**Pupils** are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time (8.45am-3.15pm)

**The governing body** are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Delegate oversight to the Safeguarding Committee

**The headteacher** is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, from the Local Authority

**The Senior Attendance Champion (senior leader)**

*Mrs Sally Johnson* [head@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:head@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk) is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

**The school attendance officer**

*Mrs Karen Holder* [admin@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk) is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion and the headteacher
- Working with school staff e.g., pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

**The class teacher** is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office no later than 9.15am

**School administration/office staff** are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents

### **School processes for recording attendance and absence**

We will keep an electronic attendance register, via SIMS, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent

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 and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil 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.

*Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day. The school gates open at 8.30am and will be closed by 8.50am. Classroom doors open at 8.40am*

*The register for the morning session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9am*

*The register for the afternoon session will be taken after lunch break at 13.15pm and close at 13.25pm*

## **Absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

This can be done by either calling the school office on 01242 6743112, leaving a message on the absence line, emailing [admin@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk) or completing an absence form on the website

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## **Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (after 8.50am) will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed (after 9am) will be marked as absent (Code U)

In order to identify any ongoing punctuality issues, reports will be generated every six weeks. Parents will be notified by letter if there is cause for concern.

## Planned absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parent/carers should notify the school by emailing [admin@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk) However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.
- We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a one off event which is unavoidable, such as the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child or a housing crisis which prevents attendance.
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.
- Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least one week before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible via the school website or the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (Code I)
- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (*see definition above*) (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes - The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to required them to travel from place to place (Code T)

- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart (Code R)

### **Procedures following unexplained absence**

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will send a follow up text asking for an immediate update of the pupils absence.
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the education welfare officer

### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

- Woodmancote School will rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually and emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment.

Other strategies the school will use are:

- Following up absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence.
- Contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality, this could be via a telephone call, a text or email.
- Proactively promote attendance practice as part of staff induction
- Consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils.

### **Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing**

The school will:

- Communicate via letter to parents when punctuality and attendance is a cause for concern
- Monitor attendance and absence data half termly, termly and yearly across the school and at individual pupil level across the school

- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts (such as a pupil premium and SEND) that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- *Write to parents to inform them that their child's attendance has fallen below 90%. Parents will be reminded of their legal duty and of the school's policy and expectations.*
- *Possibly refer to NEST or Family Support Worker who will follow up on a case by case basis*
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

## Legal sanctions

The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met.

Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Attendance - Schoolsnet \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/attendance-schoolsnet)

***If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice - note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice.***

***The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.***

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil
- Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

## Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices and the Education Act 1996 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 gives powers to the Local Authority (LA) to issue Penalty Notices when a parent or carer is considered capable of but has failed to secure their child's regular school attendance and/or punctuality.

### Why are Penalty Notices used?

Missing school can impact on children's academic attainment, disrupt school routines, and affect the continuity of their learning. Missing school can seriously affect a child's longer-term life opportunities and their ability to reach their full potential. If your child fails to attend school regularly and punctually, and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, you are guilty of a criminal offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## **What is a Penalty Notice?**

A Penalty Notice is a fixed fine which may be issued as an alternative to prosecution. If it is paid, it does not require a court appearance and does not result in a criminal record. Payment of a Penalty Notice means you avoid the potential danger of prosecution and subsequent conviction.

## **When might a Penalty Notice be issued?**

- You may face a Penalty Notice for the following reasons:
- If your child is absent from school, without authorisation from the Headteacher, for the purposes of a holiday. For a holiday taken in term time, there is no requirement for a school to issue a Notice to Improve notification or warning notice. (*G Code*)
- If your child is persistently late for school, after the register has closed and does not have authorisation from the headteacher. (*U Code*)
- If your child is absent from school and the school has been unable to find out the reason for the absence. (*O Code*)
- If your child is absent from the school and there are no exceptional circumstances for the absence for the Headteacher to authorise the absence, in line with the school's policy. (*O Code*)
- If your child, following an exclusion, is found in a public place, without a justifiable reason for being there, during school hours on a school day during the first five days of a fixed term exclusion or a permanent exclusion. The school will have sent you a letter at the time of the exclusion detailing your responsibilities during this period. For this penalty notice, the cost will be £60 for the 21 days after it is issued. If you pay after the 21-day period, but within 28 days, the fine to pay is £120

## **What is a Notice to Improve?**

You may receive a Notice to Improve notification in your email from the Local Authority (LA) when your child's absence has been marked as unauthorised for 10 sessions within 10 weeks. The sessions do not need to be consecutive. The weeks may be in different terms. The Notice to Improve will set out the school's expectations with regards to your child's attendance during the notification period.

Notice to Improve request may be submitted when a pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) within 10 school weeks, with one or a combination of the following codes:

- **Code G:** Absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday.
- **Code N:** Circumstances of the pupil's absence not yet established.
- **Code O:** Reason unknown, unauthorised.
- **Code U:** Attended after the register ended but before the end of the session, where no other code applies.

### **Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements**

**GCC Attendance and Absence from school guidance:**

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-attendance-and-exclusions-and-welfare>.

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE as a minimum of yearly by Mrs Johnson, Headteacher. At every review the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

## Attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		

<b>C</b>		Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>		Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>		Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>		Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>		Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>		Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>		Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>		Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>			
<b>G</b>		Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>		Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code

			should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>		Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>		Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day





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## Request for Leave during Term Time

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT(S)/CARER(S)

A Request for Leave during Term Time form must be completed and returned to the School Office if you intend to take your child(ren) out of school during term time. This should be completed prior to any absence.

Name of Pupil	
Date of Birth	
Year/Class	
First date of absence	
Last date of absence	

**Parents** – Parent means: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child.

Name (Parent 1)		Name (Parent 2)	
Address		Address	
Telephone number		Telephone number	
Email		Email	
Accompanying child during the leave of absence	Yes / No	Accompanying child during the leave of absence	Yes / No
Signature		Signature	
Printed name		Printed name	
Date		Date	

To establish if your reasons for the above absence are for exceptional circumstances, please give as much detail as possible (including your destination).

The decision will be based on the information you provide on this form (please continue with additional information on a separate sheet if required)

Our records will reflect that you will still proceed with this absence on an unauthorised basis, however, should you decide not to take your child out of school at this time, please let us know as soon as possible.

Reasons for request:

## Information for parents/carers

- *'Improving attendance is everyone's business'*, and it is important that we, as your child's school, work together in partnership with you, your family, your child, and the wider community.
  - Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice.
  - The penalty amount is increasing to £160 from September 2024 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence). If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period (following 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024) the fine is £160 and there is no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.
  - Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent.
  - If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court.
  - Nationally, Headteachers are: not permitted to approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances, and are to consider each application for a leave of absence individually before making our decision.
- 
- The law clearly expects Headteachers to enforce these penalties strictly.
  - Parents/carers **do not** have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. Any requests are considered on an individual basis following guidelines issued by the DfE and LA.
  - Holiday absences will not be authorised if they are not considered to meet exceptional circumstances.
  - If a pupil goes on holiday without permission, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Absence will also be unauthorised if a child does not return to school on the agreed date. Unauthorised absence could result in referral to the LA to begin legal proceedings.