

WOODHOUSE ACADEMY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY 2026–2027

Reviewed: Autumn 2026
To be reviewed: Autumn 2028

1. Introduction

At Woodhouse Academy, regular attendance and punctuality are an important part of 'The Woodhouse Way'. Being in school regularly helps pupils to achieve academically, build positive relationships, access pastoral and personal development opportunities and feel part of the school community. We recognise that barriers to attendance can be complex. Our approach is therefore based on: high expectations, early identification, listening and understanding, appropriate support, regular review and proportionate escalation.

Attendance is also a safeguarding matter. Changes in attendance, repeated absence or unexplained absence may indicate that a pupil requires additional support.

2. Aims

Woodhouse Academy aims to:

- promote excellent attendance and punctuality;
- identify attendance concerns early;
- understand and address barriers to attendance;
- work positively with pupils and families;
- reduce persistent and severe absence;
- support pupils with SEND, medical needs or other vulnerabilities;
- monitor attendance and punctuality effectively;
- ensure attendance records are accurate; and
- use formal or statutory intervention appropriately where support has not secured improvement.

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy has regard to current legislation and guidance, including:

- Working together to improve school attendance – DfE, July 2026
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Children Missing Education statutory guidance
- Staffordshire County Council Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a full-time education and, where registered at Woodhouse Academy, attend regularly.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Attendance Lead will:

- promote a whole-school culture of good attendance;
- monitor attendance, absence and punctuality;
- identify pupils and groups requiring additional support;
- oversee persistent and severe absence;
- ensure appropriate intervention and escalation;
- work closely with safeguarding, SEND, pastoral and education welfare services;
- evaluate attendance strategies; and
- report attendance information to leaders and governors.

The Attendance Officers oversee the day-to-day processes, including:

- checking registers;
- first-day absence contact;
- monitoring attendance and punctuality;
- communicating with parents;
- sending appropriate correspondence;
- supporting attendance meetings and plans; and
- escalating concerns where required.

All staff must:

- complete registers accurately and promptly;
- promote good attendance and punctuality;
- notice emerging concerns;
- raise safeguarding or pastoral concerns appropriately; and
- support pupils returning following absence.

Parents/carers should:

- ensure their child attends regularly and punctually;
- report absence promptly through Arbor;
- provide an accurate reason for absence;
- keep school informed during prolonged absence;
- engage with school where concerns arise; and
- request leave of absence in advance.

5. The School Day and Registration

Woodhouse Academy opens at 8:30am and closes at 3:35pm. The statutory attendance register is taken twice each day:

Session	Register Taken	Register Closes
Morning	8:55	9:25
Afternoon	1:25	1:55

Registers remain open for 30 minutes.

Lesson registers are also taken throughout the day for safeguarding and pupil-monitoring purposes.

What happens when pupils miss the register:

- Late Before the Register Closes – Code L
 - Pupils arriving after registration begins but before the register closes will normally receive Code L. They are recorded as attending, but repeated lateness will be monitored.
- Late After the Register Closes – Code U
 - Where a pupil arrives after the register closes and no other attendance code is more appropriate, Code U will be used. Code U is an unauthorised absence for that session.

6. The Woodhouse Late Ladder

Repeated lateness results in lost learning and can indicate a wider attendance concern.

The Late Ladder resets each half term.

Stage 1 – Recorded Late

1–2 lates

- Brief reminder about punctuality.

Stage 2 – Punctuality Reset

3 lates

- 15-minute break/lunchtime catch-up.
- Tutor conversation.

Stage 3 – Attendance Monitoring

5 lates

- Parent/carers contact.
- Punctuality monitoring.
- Agreed target and review.

● Stage 4 – Formal Attendance Meeting

8 lates

- Parent/carer meeting.
- Punctuality Action Plan where appropriate.

● Stage 5 – Escalation

Where punctuality does not improve

This may include:

- Senior Attendance Champion involvement;
- education welfare involvement;
- continued formal monitoring; and
- consideration of statutory attendance procedures.

The Late Ladder does not replace statutory attendance procedures.

Where lateness is recorded as Code U, it is unauthorised absence and may contribute towards the national Penalty Notice threshold.

Individual circumstances, including SEND, medical needs, disability and safeguarding concerns, will always be considered.

7. Reporting and Following Up Absence

Parents/carers should report absence through Arbor, or by calling the office on the first morning of absence, giving the reason and expected duration where known. Where no explanation has been received, school will undertake first-day contact.

This may include:

- contacting parents and emergency contacts;
- checking information held by school;
- liaising with pastoral or safeguarding staff;
- contacting professionals involved with the family; or
- undertaking a welfare/home visit where appropriate.

Where the reason for absence is initially unknown, Code N may be used. Code N must be replaced with the appropriate code as soon as possible. Where no satisfactory reason has been established within five school days, Code O will normally be used.

8. Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

Attendance will always be considered through a safeguarding lens. Unexpected, unexplained or repeated absence may be linked to:

- neglect or abuse;
- exploitation;
- bullying;
- mental or physical health;
- unmet SEND;
- family difficulties; or
- other welfare concerns.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, the school's safeguarding procedures will be followed immediately.

Where a pupil stops attending and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will make reasonable enquiries and follow Staffordshire County Council's Children Missing Education procedures.

A pupil will only be removed from the admission register where a statutory ground for deletion applies.

9. Illness and Medical Absence

Parents should notify school when their child is too unwell to attend. Woodhouse Academy will not routinely require medical evidence for every illness-related absence. Medical evidence may be requested where there is reasonable doubt, prolonged or repeated illness, or where further information is needed to understand the pupil's needs and provide appropriate support. The school will be flexible about what evidence may be accepted. Failure to provide a particular form of medical evidence will not automatically mean that an absence is unauthorised. Routine medical and dental appointments should be made outside school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school before and/or after the appointment wherever reasonably practicable.

10. SEND, Health and Other Barriers to Attendance

Some pupils experience additional barriers to attendance because of:

- physical or mental health;
- SEND or disability;
- anxiety about attending school;
- bullying or friendships;
- caring responsibilities;
- family circumstances; or

- other vulnerabilities.

School will work with pupils, parents and relevant professionals to understand these barriers and put appropriate support in place.

This may include:

- pastoral support;
- a trusted adult;
- SEND support;
- reasonable adjustments;
- reintegration support;
- Early Help;
- health-service involvement; or
- wider multi-agency support.

Where a pupil has a disability, the school will meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010, including making reasonable adjustments where required.

11. Part-Time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. A part-time timetable will therefore only be used in exceptional circumstances and where it is in the pupil's best interests. It must:

- be temporary;
- be agreed with parents;
- form part of a wider support or reintegration plan;
- have clear review arrangements;
- remain in place for the shortest possible time; and
- aim towards increased access to education.

A part-time timetable will not be used as a behaviour-management strategy.

12. Monitoring Attendance

Woodhouse Academy has a whole-school attendance aspiration of at least 96.5%.

This is a school aspiration rather than a statutory definition of good individual attendance.

Attendance will be analysed regularly, including:

- whole-school attendance;
- individual pupils;
- deteriorating attendance;
- persistent and severe absence;

- punctuality;
- year and tutor groups;
- SEND and disadvantaged pupils;
- pupils with a social worker;
- young carers and other vulnerable groups;
- illness and unauthorised absence; and
- patterns by day or session.

13. Persistent and Severe Absence

A pupil is persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of their possible school sessions. Where attendance approaches or reaches this level, school will:

- identify barriers;
- meet with pupils and parents where appropriate;
- agree targeted support;
- monitor attendance closely; and
- regularly review progress.

A pupil is severely absent when they miss 50% or more of their possible sessions. Severe absence will be treated as a priority and is likely to require intensive, coordinated support involving school and relevant partner agencies.

14. Attendance Support and Escalation

Our approach is graduated:

EXPECT → NOTICE → LISTEN → SUPPORT → REVIEW → FORMALISE → ESCALATE

Early support may include:

- pupil conversations;
- parent contact;
- pastoral or SEND support;
- attendance monitoring;
- attendance meetings;
- an Attendance Action Plan; and
- education welfare or wider agency involvement.

Where support has not secured sufficient improvement, has not been engaged with or is not appropriate to the circumstances, formal or statutory intervention may be considered.

15. Leave of Absence During Term Time

There is no automatic entitlement to leave during term time. Requests must be:

- made in advance;
- submitted using the school's Request for Leave During Term Time form; and
- supported by sufficient information for the Principal to consider the request.

Each request will be considered individually. Leave will normally only be authorised where there are exceptional circumstances or another statutory reason for leave applies. A holiday or leisure trip will not normally constitute an exceptional circumstance. Unauthorised leave may result in a referral to Staffordshire County Council for consideration of a Penalty Notice.

16. National Framework for Penalty Notices

Schools must consider whether a Penalty Notice is appropriate where the national threshold is met.

The threshold is: 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks (session is half a school day). The sessions:

- do not have to be consecutive;
- can span different weeks or terms; and
- can consist of different types of unauthorised absence.

This may include Code U lateness after the register has closed.

Reaching the threshold does not automatically result in a Penalty Notice. Each case will be considered individually, including:

- the reasons for absence;
- support offered;
- engagement with support;
- individual family circumstances; and
- whether a Penalty Notice is appropriate.

Where appropriate, a Notice to Improve may be used as a final opportunity to improve attendance before a Penalty Notice is issued.

17. Penalty Notice Charges

Under the National Framework:

- First Penalty Notice within three years: £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Second Penalty Notice within three years: £160, payable within 28 days.

- Third or Subsequent Offence: A third Penalty Notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within three years of the first notice. Alternative legal intervention, including prosecution, may then be considered.

Penalty Notices are issued per parent, per child where the appropriate criteria are met. Other statutory options may include an Attendance Contract, Education Supervision Order or prosecution under the Education Act 1996.

18. Supporting Improvement and Reintegration

Following significant absence, school will support pupils to return successfully. This may include:

- a reintegration meeting;
- access to a trusted adult;
- pastoral or SEND support;
- reasonable adjustments;
- help with missed learning; and
- regular review.

We will recognise positive attendance habits and improvements appropriately.

We encourage parents to contact us before attendance becomes a crisis. Early conversations give school and families the best opportunity to work together successfully.

19. Review and Publication

This policy will be:

- published on the school website;
- brought to parents' attention at the beginning of each academic year;
- reviewed when national or local guidance changes; and
- reviewed regularly to ensure school procedures remain effective.