



Wednesday 13 September 2023

FAST TRACK TO IMPROVED ATTENDANCE

Dear Parents/Carers,

Woodside Primary School are following Government guidance and have implemented the 'Fast Track' to improve Attendance' scheme.

The scheme requires that attendance problems are dealt with promptly. Parents of children who have a number of unauthorised absences during the school year, place themselves at risk of legal action.

In order to avoid any confusion, if your child is absent from school for any reason, please ensure you follow this guidance: -

1. Telephone the school immediately on the 1st day that your child is too ill to attend school, and on any subsequent day of absence, to keep the school informed of the situation and of when your child is likely to return to school.
2. To provide medical evidence to the school, where possible, to support the absence as being due to ill health. This evidence can be in the form of a copy of a prescription for medicine, the prescribed medicine packaging, with the child's name and date of issue on, or an appointment card to the school office. The provision of medical evidence will enable the school to authorise the absence.
3. Where possible, routine appointments, i.e. dentist/doctor/ should be made outside school hours. If appointments need to be made during the school day, please provide a copy of the appointment letter to the school office. The provision of this medical evidence will enable the school to authorise the absence.
4. Children are expected to attend school, either side of their specific appointment time. A whole day of absence is not acceptable for an appointment taking place during the morning or afternoon, as only the appointment time will be recorded as authorised. Please speak to our office if this is likely to be an issue.
5. We will not authorise any sibling's absence, late arrival or leaving early, for another sibling's appointment. You need to make other arrangements to ensure siblings attend school as normal, otherwise their absence will be recorded as unauthorised.



6. Do not keep your child away from school if there is an issue in school. Contact the school to arrange a meeting with the class teacher or a senior member of staff, to discuss your concerns.
7. Do not keep your child away from school for reasons other than illness, i.e. birthdays, holidays, relatives' visits, shopping trips, your own health and saying you have no one to bring them to school or collect them at the end of the day etc. Absences due to these reasons will be unauthorised.
8. Regulations on attendance state that no holidays will be authorised in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In light of this we have taken the decision that **under no circumstances will holidays during term time be authorised**. A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity or learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons on their return. Should a child's attendance be a cause for concern there may be a referral to the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice.

**The fixed penalty notice is £120 per parent per child to be paid within 28 days.
However this is reduced to £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.**

Please see below the procedures taken in a bid to tackle poor or persistent absences:

Stage 1 – A letter will be sent home informing parents that their child's attendance has fallen below the expected level of 96% and that their attendance will be monitored for further decline. Medical evidence, regardless of reason will be required to authorise any further absences from this point onwards.

Stage 2 – if there is a further decline in attendance a letter will be sent home asking for the parent to attend a meeting with the attendance officer to discuss attendance issues and set targets.

Stage 3 – If attendance declines further or does not improve a referral to the educational welfare officer (EWO) will be made. Parents will be invited to an attendance conference with the (EWO) and a member of the leadership team. At this meeting an attendance plan will be agreed.

If you are concerned about your child's attendance and would like to talk to someone at school about it. Please contact Mrs Norris, our attendance officer, Mrs Georgiades, our family support worker or myself.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs H Robinson
Deputy Headteacher

