



Woodside Group Student Attendance Policy

Introduction:

Woodside Group is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our students. Regular attendance is critical if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all students.

- We will endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome.
- We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role, and a legal responsibility, to ensure good attendance and we promise to identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents/carers, students and other agencies to resolve attendance and punctuality problems.

Parental responsibility

The responsibility for ensuring children attend school regularly and punctually rests with parents. To this end, it is desirable that parents should be the first line of contact whenever the child is absent from school. It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school whenever the child is absent and on the first day of absence and to send a letter confirming the reason on their child's return to school.

Frequent absence is also a cause for concern. Family Link Workers are very helpful and can normally clarify whether ongoing absence is justified. At Woodside Group students are expected to arrive by 9:00 am. Any students arriving late will have a member of staff awaiting them and it is this person who is responsible for letting both Head of Bases and the school office know of their arrival time.

- As stated above, it is the responsibility of the parents/carers to be the first line of contact and to contact the school whenever a child is absent and on the first day of absence before 8:30 am.
- It is the school which authorises the absence, not the parent/carer.
- Absence is either authorised, such as in the case of illness or of religious observance, or unauthorised, when there is no reason given for such absence or when it is considered that the explanation is unjustified or unreasonable.

Non-Attendance

Any non-attendance above one week will be notified to the LA. Parents will be notified of this. If we believe the absence is a potential safeguarding issue, the DSL will contact the LA to inform of absence. As a matter of course school will always contact Parents on the day of absence and make follow up calls as necessary dependent on the length of absence. In the first instance this call will be made by the Head of Base or in their absence, a member of Admin staff.

Leave of absence/holiday

Woodside Group will consider each request for holiday absence individually but will only grant such requests in **exceptional** circumstances.

Schools will never normally authorise holidays in term time under the following circumstances:

- At the beginning of school terms
- During formal assessments/exams i.e. Term 6
- Where the child is persistently absent, including because of ill health (25 days absence in the previous year or where there have already been 10 or more school days absence in the current year) We will always invite parents/carers into school to discuss any proposed holiday in term time with the headteacher. A proposed holiday will never be authorised if parents/carers do not attend such a meeting. Leave of absence during term time is authorised, or not, by the school. The school cannot authorise more than ten days unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- All requests for holiday leave; see Appendix 1 (Woodside Lodge Holidays in Term Time Policy)

Statement).

- Holidays taken without the school's permission, or failure to return on the agreed date, will mean that the absence is unauthorized. The deliberate taking of a holiday in term time without or against school permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not or would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 school days, may result in parents being liable to a penalty notice.
- If a student fails to return within ten school days of the agreed return date, and if there is not a good reason for this absence, the school, in discussion with the Family Link Worker and Behaviour Service, may remove the student's name from the school roll.

Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LEA Officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004. From January 2005, Leicestershire County Council will consider issuing Penalty Notices in the following circumstances:

. (a) overt truancy (including students caught on truancy sweeps)

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. (b) parentally-condoned absences

. (c) excessive holidays in term-time

. (d) excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement

. (e) persistent late arrival at school

A Welcome Back

- It is important that on return from an absence that all students are made to feel welcome.

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- This should include ensuring that the student is helped to adjust to the school's daily routine, catch up on any missed work, and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other students.

Register Security

- The register must be safely stored when not used to record attendance.

Woodside Group Holidays in Term Time Policy Statement

Due to the nature of ASD, we understand that holidays can often be very difficult for parents to arrange and students to access, particularly at peak times of the year. At the discretion of the Headteacher, up to 5 school days family holiday can be taken in term time where the student's attendance is above 85% for the previous academic year, which will be registered as an Authorised Absence: any subsequent days will be registered as Unauthorised Absence. Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to withdraw students for a holiday and in law have to apply for permission in advance. Parents must complete the appropriate 'Leave of Absence' form and return this completed at least 2 weeks prior to the holiday, and preferably prior to booking the holiday. Parents/carers should attach a letter if there are exceptional circumstances for the request being made.