



# WOODLANDS FEDERATION

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Updated January 2019

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Woodlands Federation by

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

### **Principles**

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

***Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.***

***Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:***

- ❖ ***parents keeping children off school unnecessarily***
- ❖ ***truancy before or during the school day***
- ❖ ***absences which have never been properly explained***
- ❖ ***children who arrive at school too late to get a mark***

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service from the Local Authority. The Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

### **Procedures**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

In all cases of absence, every effort will be made by the school to obtain the reason for absence, so that it may be authorised as appropriate.

Parents of children are expected to telephone the school by 9.30am on the first day of their child's absence. A message can be left on the school answerphone stating the child's name, class and reason for absence. Any absences where the reason is unknown will be marked as unauthorised in the class register.

The school office will telephone parents who have not informed the school of their child's whereabouts by 9.30am.

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of the expected duration of any absence over one day.

### **Lateness**

All children who arrive after 8.55am must report to the school office to be marked on the class register.

### **Persistent Absence**

Persistent absence is recorded and monitored by the school's designated Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Initially a letter of concern will be sent home to parent's by a

member of the Senior Leadership Team (Inclusion manager, Head of School or Executive Headteacher) requesting improved attendance, and parents will be requested to attend a meeting with a member (or members) of the Senior Leadership Team if attendance continues to remain poor. If, after all the school's effort to resolve the problem, attendance remains poor the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

### **Absences in Term Time (including holidays)**

There is no entitlement for parents to remove their child from school during term time, including for the purposes of a holiday.

- In exceptional circumstances parents can request to remove their child from learning.
- All such requests must be made on the school's official "Withdrawal from Learning" form – letters will not be accepted.
- The "exceptional circumstances" must be clearly stated on the form.
- The form must be returned to the school office well in advance of the requested period for withdrawal from learning.
- Parents should not assume that returning the form guarantees that the absence request will be approved.
- The Head of School and Executive Headteacher have the authority to decide whether or not to authorise the absence. In making a decision he/she will take the following into account.
  - The reasons given for the absence(e.g. the "exceptional" circumstances)
  - The impact on the pupil's learning
  - Whether the child will miss any preparations for tests/exams
  - Whether the child will miss tests or exams
  - The child's previous attendance record – including any patterns of absences

### **In signing the form, parents are confirming that they understand the following:**

- If a child is removed from learning without approval, the absence will be marked as "unauthorised" in the class register. In addition, the Head of School/Executive Headteacher may report the absence to the Education Welfare Service who have the authority to issue a Warning Notice and/or a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- A child who is removed for a prolonged period in term time (that is – longer than a normal absence for sickness) will miss a large amount of school work while he or she is away and will be unprepared for the work on returning to school.
- The school cannot guarantee that the teacher will be able to spend time helping a child to catch up with the work missed during the absence.
- Asking for extra work to do at home may not be appropriate as the child may have missed initial and ongoing teaching and assessment.

### **Appointments**

Help your child by making appointments (doctor, dentist, optician) after school hours wherever possible.

## **Feeling Unwell**

If your child has a cold, headache or other minor illness which isn't contagious, send them in to school. Please notify the school if your child has a serious illness where authorised absence may need to be taken.

## **Feeling Tired**

If a child is tired they should still come to school. Developing good bedtime habits (going to bed at a consistent time, relaxing beforehand, not using blue screen electronic devices in the hours before bed, sleeping in a darkened and airy room) will help to get good quality sleep.

## **Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives**

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

Woodlands Federation target for attendance in 2018-19 is 97% over all.

## **Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead: the Head of School

The Deputy Safeguarding Lead: the Inclusion Manager

The Executive Headteacher

The Safeguarding Governor: Monica Pell

Office Administrative Staff

## **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

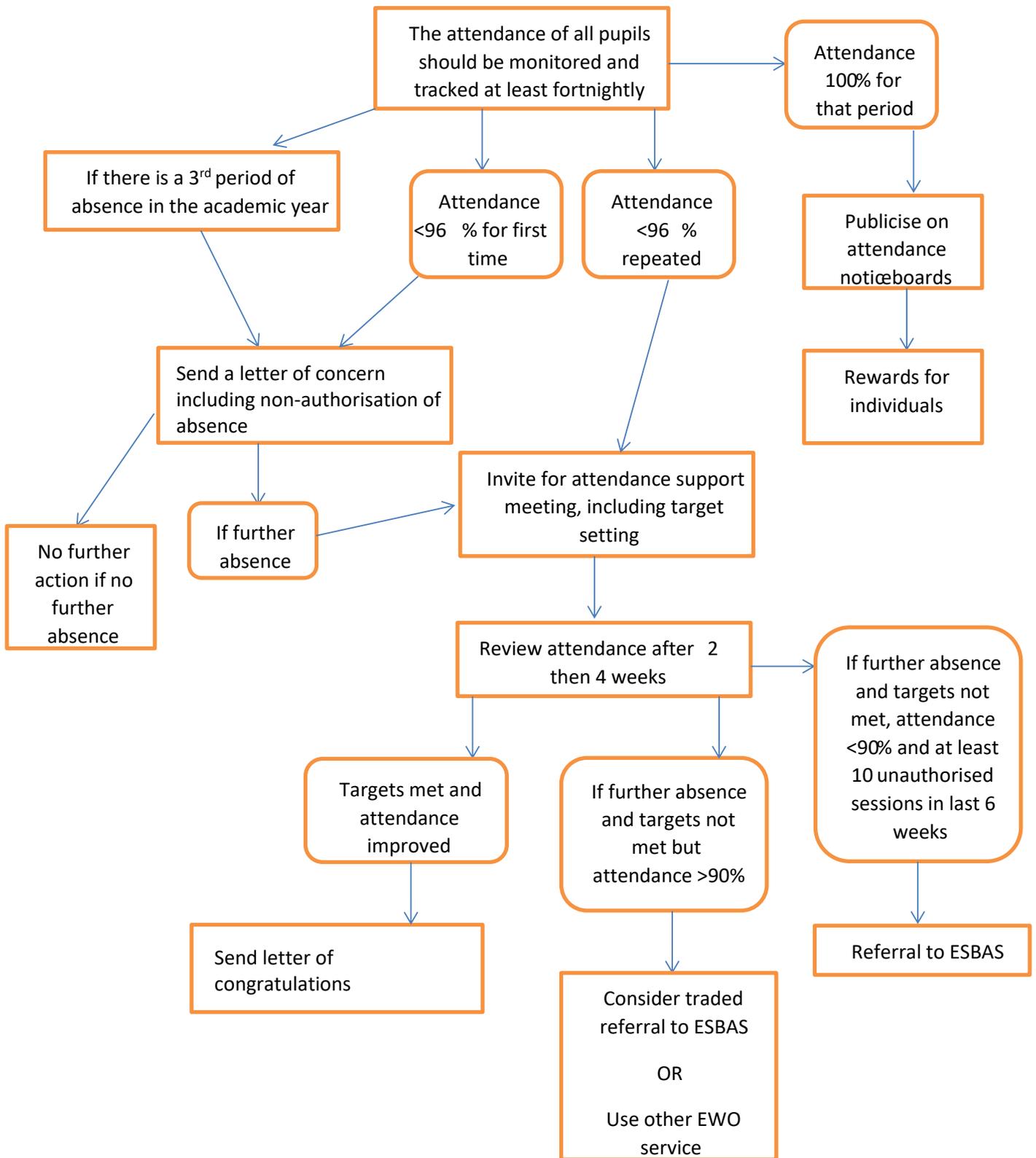
## **Safeguarding and attendance (from East Sussex guidance document)**

School attendance and punctuality is often a key indicator in identifying where a child or young person is at risk. Schools play a vital role in ensuring that a child or young person is not at risk of harm, including radicalisation, abuse and child sexual exploitation. It is particularly important that early action is taken around attendance for those children and young people who are particularly vulnerable, such as those on a Child Protection Plan, Looked After Children, children who are known to be at risk of sexual exploitation and those where there are any other safeguarding concerns. This action would be taken on a daily basis, followed by a system that looks for concerning patterns of attendance over a period of time.

Appendix 1 gives guidance on how schools should monitor patterns of attendance.

Appendix 2 gives guidance on daily absence procedures to ensure the immediate safety of children and young people, including when to contact other agencies, such as social care and the police.

## Appendix 1 – Guidance on how to monitor and track pupil attendance



## Appendix 2 – Daily absence guidance.

