



Issue Date	Sept 2024
Next Review Date	Sept 2025

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Woldingham ensures that all students attend school regularly so that they are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. Absence is discouraged as it leads to educational disadvantage and may place students at risk.

The school recognises its duty to inform the local authority of any student who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 consecutive contact points. The school will also inform the local authority if a child is going to be removed from the school register for any of the circumstances stated in Part 1 of KCSIE (September 2024).

The school recognises its duty to immediately inform the UK Visa and Immigration service [UKVI] of any student with a school sponsored UKVI Student Visa who fails to attend the school for 10 consecutive days without explanation and the school's permission.

The school is required by law to maintain two separate registers of its students:

- An Admissions Register, known as the "School Roll", and
- An Attendance Register

Aims

The aim of the Attendance Policy is to ensure that accurate records of attendance are kept and any absences are followed up immediately so that all students at Woldingham School are able to benefit fully from its educational provision. The policy also recognises the role monitoring attendance has within our overall safeguarding approach. Students are encouraged to accept responsibility for their attendance and recognise how their presence contributes positively to the school community. High achievement is linked closely with high attendance.

Objectives

To ensure that procedures are in place to accurately record attendance and follow up all instances of non-attendance at statutory AM/PM and other school defined registration sessions and to take action, where appropriate.

To ensure that all students make every effort to attend school regularly and punctually in order to gain the maximum benefit from all the educational opportunities open to them.

To ensure tutors record and monitor attendance at school and, with Heads of Year, ensure that instances of unpunctuality and non-attendance are followed-up.

To ensure parents are kept fully informed of instances of students' non-attendance and, if necessary, reminded of their responsibility to ensure that their daughter(s) attend(s) school regularly. This is done by a combination of letters, emails and online portals.

Procedures

The school maintains an Attendance Procedure and Responsibilities document which describes the detail of how staff will ensure that this policy is adhered to.

The Deputy Head Pastoral* is the Senior Attendance Champion and is responsible for championing and improving attendance. Supported by the Deputy Head team, they are responsible for overseeing, directing and co-ordinating the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. They will also monitor and evaluate the efficacy of the school's processes.

Good attendance is established as part of the school's culture and is reflected in both strategic planning and day to day systems and processes. Attendance certificates are regularly awarded in assemblies and prizes given for 100% attendance.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a student is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their daughter's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

It is the responsibility of tutors and teachers to register students during the morning registration session and at every lesson. Teachers and tutors also should ensure that all students are aware of why registration needs to happen and how the students need to prioritise getting to registration and lessons on time. The Attendance and Pastoral Officer and Year Staff have the responsibility of monitoring and following-up absences on a day to day basis to ensure all students are accounted for.

At Woldingham School, we see education as a partnership between the family and the school. We are committed to providing the highest quality of education for the girls, and we look to parents to support this objective.

Whilst punctuality and good attendance is an expectation for all students at the school, we recognise that this may be more of a challenge for some students, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, or those suffering from long term medical conditions or mental health issues. The school will allow for these circumstances when working with such students and their parents and will make reasonable adjustments / develop individualized support approaches as appropriate to meet their specific needs. If a student has an EHCP, the school will communicate with the local authority if attendance falls or becomes problematic.

All students are required to be in school by 8.30am. Any student arriving after registration and before the end of the AM session will be marked late. Registration for the AM session closes at 9.00am. Arrivals after this time will be marked as unauthorised absence, unless a valid reason has been provided in advance. The school day ends at 4.00 pm, although many day girls remain later for study, supper or extra-curricular activities. Day girls are normally expected to leave by 6.40 pm.

Lateness will be monitored and may result in students being sanctioned by the Head of Year.

Students are not allowed to leave the site during the school day unless:

- their parents have obtained prior permission from the Head of Year, including medical and similar appointments
- they are accompanied by a member of staff on a trip or a visit to a sporting fixture, and parents will have been notified of the dates in advance
- Sixth Form students who do not have a lesson period 6 on Fridays are allowed to leave at 3pm.

Requests for absence must be made in accordance with the instructions provided in the Student Handbook, available on the parent portal. We will always telephone home on the first day of an unexplained absence to check on the student's welfare and will maintain communication during periods of absence.

If a student is unwell and unable to come to school, parents/guardians are requested to email the school by 8.25am using: absence@woldinghamschool.co.uk, giving a reason for absence and a date when the child is expected to return to school. Parents/guardians should continue to email every morning before 8.25am on each day of absence unless otherwise agreed.

If a student arrives at school any time after the end of morning registration (8.55am), for whatever reason, she must go directly to Main House Reception to register her arrival on site before going to lessons.

Parents/guardians of students who have patterns of lateness or poor attendance, will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents/guardians will be invited to school to discuss attendance and identify any support that can be offered to remove barriers to attendance.

If a student misses 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence can disadvantage a student by creating gaps in her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%, and as such, the school monitors all absences thoroughly and contact will be made by the Head of Year as absence levels fall to 95% or less. If a student's attendance level falls to 90% or less parents/guardians will be invited to a meeting to discuss strategies to improve attendance.

School term dates are sent out at least a year in advance so parents/guardians can arrange holidays without disrupting the students' education. It is school policy, as per Government guidance, to not allow holiday or other non-medical absence to be taken during term unless in exceptional circumstances. Permission for any holiday or non-medical absence during term time must be requested in writing, in advance, clearly stating the exceptional circumstance necessitating the absence.

The school will send regular reminders to parents about absence procedures and include them in key publications, on the parent portal and school website. Tutors and year staff will discuss the importance of attendance and absence in tutor time, assemblies and in Thrive sessions.

The Governing Body maintain an overview of attendance through termly reports at the Safeguarding and Welfare Committee provided by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

This policy is also linked to:

- Attendance Procedure and Responsibilities
- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Missing Pupil Policy

Contact Details

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