# Attendance Policy

| | |
|---|---|
| Document Owner: | Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour and Attitudes) |
| Approval Date: | October 2023 |
| Approved by: | Academy Council |
| Review Date: | September 2024 |
| Version: | V1.0 |

Shaw Education Trust

# Contents

# At Woodhey High School our vision is:

To be a centre of excellence, where students, staff and the community are proud to work together to broaden our horizons, exceed our aspirations and where everyone achieves their full potential.

## #TeamWoodhey

*At Woodhey High School, we have two key values that drive our actions, our choices, and our decisions.*

These are:

**Respect**

We treat everyone as we wish to be treated ourselves; we are all part of the same team

**Excellence**

We strive to be the best we can be at all times; nothing but the best is good enough for us

*Underpinning our values are two clear expectations.*

These are:

Respect every member of staff and student in our community, following all instructions without answering back

Being excellent by being prepared for, and completing all work to the best of our ability without distracting others

We are a team made up of our staff, our students, our parents and carers, and our wider community. Our vision, values and expectations apply to all of our community.

Teamwork is the secret that makes common people achieve uncommon results (Ifeanyi Enoch Onuoha)

## #TeamWoodhey

# Attendance Policy

This policy is designed to support good attendance and punctuality. Educational research shows a strong link between 100% attendance and high achievement.

## 1. Principles

At Woodhey High School we believe promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. Attendance is a key issue for all involved in education. The Education Act 1996 states: 'If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his or her parent is guilty of an offence.'

The school collaborates with the Local Authority to ensure that we maintain good standards of student attendance.

Attendance in school is critical in the learning process. If a child does not attend school, they cannot learn and therefore develop as an individual. All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents or carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea 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. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

## 2. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance

- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.

- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

- Building strong relationships with families to ensure Students have the support in place to attend school.

- Promoting and supporting punctuality in school and lessons.

## 3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

# 4. Roles and responsibilities

## 4.1 The Academy Council

The Academy Council is responsible for:

Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by:

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.

- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

## 4.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual Students

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

## 4.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement Evaluating and monitoring expectations andprocesses

- Having an oversight of data analysis

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

- Developing and leading targeted intervention and support to Students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs. Lomax and can be contacted via 01706 82512.

## 4.4 The attendance teams

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.

- Transfer calls from parents and carers to the head of year/pastoralmanagers in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible forattendance and the headteacher

- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistentabsence Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed penalty notices.

- Targeting interventions and support for students and families

- Collaborating with the Progress Team to secure strong attendance and punctuality

- Conducting home visits to support students and families.

The attendance officers are Miss Tracy Boswell and Miss Rachel Rothwell and can be contacted via telephone 01706 825125.

## 4.5 Form tutors / Class teachers

- Form tutors/class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily,using the correct codes, and submitting this information via the school's information management system as soon as they are aware.

- Form tutors and class teachers' complete registers within the first ten minutes of form time and lessons.

- Form tutors discuss attendance concerns within Progress team meetings and will work with students and families to secure improvements in attendance when concerns arise.

## 4.6 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/every session on time.

- Call the school on 01706 825125 to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence) and advise when they are expected to return.

- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

- Provide medical evidence of illness and medical appointments.

## 4.7 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time, arrive in school for 8:30am through the student entrance.

- Attend every timetabled lesson on time.

# 5. Roles and responsibilities

## 5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all Students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every Student is:

- Present

- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry

- The amended entry

- The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not

- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity.

- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must be in the school building by 8.30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:25pm and will be kept open until 12.55pm.

## 5.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent or carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school absence line or the reception staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent or carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents and carers will be notified of this.

## 5.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent or carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents and carers should inform the school via email or telephone and a note will then be placed on the School Information System to inform staff of the appointment in order to release the student for signing out at the Attendance Office.

However, we encourage parents and carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent or carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## 5.4 Lateness and punctuality

Students arriving late to the morning form tutor group registration (**after 8.30am)** and pm registration (during lesson 4) will be marked late.

- Students arriving on site **after 8.30am** must report to the main reception. Their names  will be noted, and they will be marked as late. The students will then go to their form for the remainder of the form time.
- Students on the list will be given automatic detention that same day after school.
- Failure to attend the after-school detention will result in the following and application of the Behaviour Policy.
- Students arriving late for the PM register (Period 4) will be marked as late.
- Parents and carers of students causing concerns over repeated lateness to school will be contacted by the Attendance/Progress Team and meetings arranged.
- Any student who continues to be late, after these steps have been followed, will be referred to the Local Support Team and parents or carers may be issued with a penalty notice in accordance with the School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures (January 2015).
- After the register has closed, students will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

- Sanctions for lateness to school and lessons will be applied in accordance with the School Behavior Policy.

## 5.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Send out a text notification to ask the unexplained absence to be explained.

- Call the student's parent or carer on the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.

- If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts after 2 days of no contact a welfare check will be completed by school staff.

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.

- Call the parent and carer each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken wherenecessary.

- If absence continues, the school will consider involving external services to conduct a welfare check not limited to Education Welfare Officer/Police.

## 5.6 Following up unexplained absence

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.

## 6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. The headteacher mayrequire evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

- Traveller Students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreedwith the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.

### 6.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rollingacademic year

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

- Where an excluded Student is found in a public place duringschool hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the localauthority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 7. Strategies for promoting attendance

- At the end of each half term, we have year group assemblies where attendance is celebrated.

- At the end of each half term, we have rewards breakfasts where 100% attendance is celebrated.

- Attendance challenges are set each half-term to reward a range of attendance foci, including improved attendance, 95% attendance and above etc.,

- Attendance information is included in all whole school events e.g., Parent's evening, Open Evening, Settling in Evening.

- Attendance mentoring with the school attendance officer, tutors, mentors and Directors of Progress.

- Weekly SLT meetings to discuss whole school attendance.

- Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 strategy meetings are held every three weeks to support attendance concerns and adopt a team around the student approach.

- Curriculum linked to Gatsby Benchmarks, attendance and progress.

- Home visits, Early Help Intervention and ESBA modules.

- Student Attendance meetings.

## 8. Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

- Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Academy Council.

### 8.1 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these Students and their families.

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

### 8.2 Using data to improve attendance

The Attendance Officers:

- Provide regular attendance data to Senior Leaders and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families.

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

### 8.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.

- Hold regular meetings with the parents and carers of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance including referrals to but not limited- Early Help and MASH.

- A parental meeting will be held to discuss persistent unauthorised absences and discuss an action plan of support to help increase attendance.

## 9. Monitoring attendance

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Academy Council.

## 10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy

- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|------------|----------|
| / | Present (am) | Student is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Student is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Student arrives late before register has closed |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| D | Dual registered | Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| J | Interview | Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| P | Sporting activity | Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| W | Work experience | Student is on work experience placement |

| Authorised absence | | |
|------|------------|----------|
| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Student is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Student is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Year 11 Student is on study leave during their public examinations |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |

| Unauthorised absence | | |
|---|---|---|
| Code | Definition | Scenario |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Student is on holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for Student's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Student arrived at school after the register closed |
| X | Not required to be in school | Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or Student is in custody |
| Z | Student not on admission register | Register set up but Student has not yet joined the school |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial schoolclosure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |