

**Woolenwick Junior School**  
**Admissions and Attendance Policy**

Policy Name	Admissions and Attendance Policy
Created by	School
Responsibility of	School Improvement Committee
Reviewed by	MC / JB + consultation with Chris Hall Attendance Officer
This Review Date	March 2012
Next Review Due	March 2015
Cycle	3 Years
Ratified by Full Governing Body on	5/3/2012

**Version History**

Version	Amendments	Date	Author
V1	Original document		
V2	Addition of Fixed term penalty notice, unauthorised school term holidays	Spring term 2012	MC + JB

## Admissions and Appeals

- The School follows the HCC Admissions and Appeals Policy that is produced annually in a booklet format.
- A copy is available from the school office.
- The School Admissions and Appeals Policy is also referred to in the school prospectus that is available from the school office or school website.
- All Primary Admissions are handled with the Local Authority acting as the clearing house. Applications may be made using the application form contained in the Starting School Booklet or on-line.
- Casual admissions are coordinated by the Local Authority. Application forms are available from the Local Authority..

## Attendance

- It is the duty of all parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school consistently and on time.
- The school sets attendance targets annually
- School rates of authorised and unauthorised absence are submitted to the Department of Children, Schools and Families and are published in the school data return and in the School Performance and Raise Online
- Woolenwick Junior School follows Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice for Truancy Procedures. At Woolenwick we expect parents/carers to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 21 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in a term (including unauthorised holidays ), the Head Teacher may ask the LA to issue a Penalty Notice. The penalty is £50 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £100 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If the penalty is not paid the LA may prosecute the parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance

## Authorised Absence

- In case of absence through illness parents/carers should contact the school by telephone on the day of the illness or in exceptional circumstances by the following day.
- If the Headteacher considers a child has a valid reason for not being in school their absence will be 'authorised.'
- On the first day of absence the school will contact parent/carers to find out why the child is not in school .

## Unauthorised Absence

- If no reason is given for a child's absence or if the reason given is judged inappropriate then the absence will be marked 'unauthorised'.
- The school aims to have no unauthorised absences
- If a child has more than 21 unauthorised sessions ( 1 session is a morning or afternoon) in the previous and/or current term the Attendance Improvement Officer and school will consider the issuing of a Penalty Notice (**Please see Appendix A**)

## Lateness

- Children who are late for school will have this marked in the register. Late is after 8.50am and before 9.15am. Any child who arrives at school after 9.15am may be regarded as having an unauthorised absence for the whole of that session.
- A child who is present for the afternoon register is considered to have attended for the whole session.

## **Signing children in and out of school**

- Parents should sign all children who are late in to the late-book. This is kept in the school office.
- Parents should also sign out any children who leave the site due to medical or other reasons.
- An accurate record of the children who are in school is vital in case of fire.

## **Taking Children out of School during Term Time**

- All absences that are not through illness must have the permission of the Headteacher. A form for this is available from the school office.
- The Headteacher may authorise no more than 10 days of 'authorised absence'. All other absences will be unauthorised. Holidays during term time are discouraged because periods of absence are harmful to a child's education. Woolenwick, along with other Stevenage Primary Schools, working with representatives of the Local Authority, have decided that from September 2010, we will no longer authorise holidays in term time, except in very exceptional circumstances.
- Holidays etc that are unauthorised will count towards the issuing of a Penalty Notice for Truancy

## **Staff Guidance**

- The School provides clear guidance for staff on how to complete the School Registers and what to do in cases of pupil absence.
- This guidance is contained in the staff handbook and in the front of each class register

## **Reporting to parents**

- Rates of Authorised and unauthorised absence are reported to parents in the child's annual report at the end of the school year.

## **Encouraging good attendance**

- Woolenwick Junior School rewards good attendance by use of certificates awarded each term for pupils who have attended for 100% during the term. Certificates will also be awarded to those pupils who have made a significant improvement in their attendance.
- At the end of each school year the school will complete Hertfordshire county council certificates for pupils whose school attendance has been 100% for that academic year.
- The winning House of the Attendance Competition i.e. the House with the best attendance that week, will be announced in a Friday Golden Assembly.
- Regular reminders of the importance of good attendance will be made in newsletters and assemblies.
- Regular attendance reports will be made to the governing body.
- Parents will be informed of their child's rates of authorised and unauthorised absence in the annual report at the end of the school year.
- Meetings are arranged in school with parents in order to discuss any attendance issues and look for any support strategies.

## **Monitoring Absence and Lateness**

- The Clerical Assistant keeps the registers under regular review to chase unexplained absence or frequent lateness
- The registers are reviewed by the Headteacher and Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) once per month. Any concerns or reasons for praise are followed up by either the school or the AIO.
- Attendance of children from the traveller community is monitored by a AIO from the Traveller Support Service.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Hertfordshire County Council Children, Schools and Families**

#### **Penalty Notice for Truancy - Code of Conduct**

##### **1. Legislation**

Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LA Officers, Head Teachers (and Deputy and Assistant Head teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The issuing of penalty notices must conform with all requirements of the Human Rights Act and all Equal Opportunities legislation. The Local Authority is responsible for developing the Code of Conduct that all partners named in the Act must adhere to when using the powers.

##### **2. Statement of intent**

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for students registered at school and is essential if students are to maximise the educational opportunities available to them.

A penalty notice can also be issued if a pupil fails to attend an alternative education provision, such as an Education Support Centre, College or Youth Programmes Unit provision.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduces penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Parents may discharge potential liability for conviction by paying a penalty.

Penalty notices involve the recipient paying a fine of £50 if paid within 28 days, or £100 if paid within 42 days. Failure to pay the fine within 42 days will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdrawal of the notice. (limited circumstances apply) Prosecution will be taken by the LA under the Education Act 1996, section 444

To comply with Human Rights legislation it is essential that Penalty Notices be issued in a consistent manner. This code of conduct will govern the issuing of penalty notices for Hertfordshire County Council.

The Local Authority will retain any revenue from penalty notices to cover the administration of the scheme and any legal action arising from it.

### **3. Circumstances under which a Penalty Notice will be issued:**

Penalty notices can only be issued in cases of **unauthorised absence**.

- a) The pupil's absence must have been **unauthorised** for at least **21** sessions in the previous and/or current term.
- b) The parent or carer is not willing to take responsibility for securing their child's attendance and has not co-operated with any proposed voluntary or supportive measures.
- c) In the early stages of casework when the Attendance Improvement Officer is of the opinion that the issuing of a penalty notice could avoid further absence. e.g. where a parent or carer continually fails to provide an explanation for a pupil's absence in accordance with the school's procedures. Attendance Improvement Officers will only issue penalty notices when the pupil concerned is an open case to them.
- d) The deliberate taking of a holiday during term time without the school's permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not/would not be given) and where this has resulted in a period of unauthorised absence in the current school year exceeding 10 days school days. In such cases, a separate notice will be issued for each child. Should a parent fail or refuse to pay any penalty notice issued for this reason, and a prosecution is undertaken the evidence provided by the school would be the only information laid before the court.
- e) Following a truancy patrol when the reason for absence is avoidable, and the parent or carer has fails to co-operate (and give an undertaking that it will not happen again) penalty notices will not be issued during a Truancy Patrol as this could involve a health and safety risk to the Attendance Improvement Officer.
- f) The issuing of a penalty notice does not conflict with any other legal action already being processed.
- g) A penalty notice should not be issued when the pupil concerned is in the care of Hertfordshire County Council, without prior discussion with the Attendance and Pupil Support Team Manager, Children, Schools and Families.

### **4. Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices:**

**To ensure consistency and equitable delivery Penalty Notices will be issued by the Head of Attendance and Pupil Support.**

Penalty notices will only be issued by post and never as an on the spot action. This is to comply with Health and Safety requirements and to satisfy evidential requirements.

No parent or carer will receive more than **two** separate penalty notices resulting from unauthorised absence

of an individual child in any twelve-month period. There will be no restrictions on the number of times a parent or carer may receive a formal warning of the possible issue of a penalty notice. The Attendance and Pupil Support Service will receive applications to issue penalty notices from Schools, Police and neighbouring local authorities. Applications should be submitted on the form provided and sent to the Attendance and Pupil Support Team Manager for the area where the child's school is based. Penalty Notices will be issued provided that:

- The circumstances of the pupil's absence meet the requirements of the Local Authority Code of Conduct.
- The relevant information is provided in the specified manner.

**5. Procedure for withdrawing Penalty Notices:**

A penalty notice may be withdrawn by the Local Authority in any case in which the authority determines that:

- It has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- It ought not to have been issued, or
- It ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient, or
- The penalty notice has not been paid in full before the expiry date but it is not appropriate to prosecute the recipient for the offence in connection with which the notice was issued.

If the penalty notice is not paid and does not meet the criteria for withdrawal, the Local Authority will take a prosecution under section 444 or 444.1.a. of the Education Act 1996. The school may be required to provide a witness statement and staff may be required to give evidence in court.

**6. Payment of Penalty Notices:**

Arrangements for payment are detailed on the Penalty Notice.

**The Local Authority will retain any revenue from penalty notices to cover the administration of the scheme and any legal action arising from it.**