

Attendance Policy

Summary

Woodham Academy has an overriding concern for the well-being of its students. All aspects of Woodham's Attendance policy are in accordance with our responsibilities under equality, diversity and disability discrimination legislation.

We seek to ensure that all students of Woodham Academy receive an education which maximises opportunities for each young person to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community is able to thrive.

We believe that all students benefit from the education we provide, and therefore from regular attendance. The aim of our attendance policy is to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to provide support in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time.

This policy has been written in line with the DFE 'School attendance Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' (October 2014) and 'School attendance parental responsibility measures' (January 2015). This Attendance policy outlines the procedures which will be utilised to support excellent attendance at school.

This policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

Date adopted	January 2017
Review date	Annually
Last Reviewed	January 2017

1. Principles

Woodham Academy recognises the importance of excellent attendance for students to achieve their maximum potential. Our firm belief is that most students will have good attendance. *Please see appendix 1 for definitions of attendance.* However, we recognise that some students and their parents will struggle to ensure they attend regularly. This policy aims to outline the appropriate support for both students and their parents to remove any barriers that have led to poor attendance. However, we also recognise that there are occasions where we must utilise the support of the Local Authority in taking legal action to ensure that a student's attendance improves.

We are committed to the following principles:

- Woodham's first and over-riding concern is for the development and well-being of its students.
- We wish Woodham Academy, as a community, to be based upon the principles of achievement for all, tolerance, respect and good citizenship.
- A positive and encouraging ethos is central to the engagement of students and their good attendance.
- Creating a safe and orderly environment where all students feel safe and are able to learn.
- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by their own absence.
- Action being taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Clarify the expectations of each of the stakeholders of the school.
- Clarify the school's approach to processes to ensure excellent attendance.
- Give guidance to parents on what actions the school will take to support young people in ensuring they have excellent attendance.

3. Roles and Responsibilities:

As part of the Academy's approach to maintaining excellent attendance, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant Academy policies and guidance directed to parents and staff.
- Annually review the Academy's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and students to implement the policy effectively.
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off site.

4. Director of Student Support in conjunction with Heads of Learning:

As part of the Academy's approach to maintaining high attendance, the Director of Student Support in conjunction with Heads of Learning will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the policy and its effectiveness, with annual review of full policy.
- Ensure that staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure government legislation on attendance is complied with and that the leadership team are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- Report attendance to the governors in each report given by the Headteacher.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.

5. Teachers and support staff:

As part of the Academy's approach to maintaining high attendance, the teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Ensure the senior manager responsible for overseeing attendance and any other relevant personnel are kept fully aware of and up to date with any concerns relating to students that may impact on their attendance.
- Ensure compliance with regulation and guidance on attendance.
- Work professionally with parents, carers, students and relevant agencies to secure improvements in attendance via appropriate support or enforcement measures.
- Ensure understanding and follow the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken each lesson and session.

6. Parents / Carers:

As part of the Academy approach to maintaining high attendance, we expect that parents / carers will:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy regarding absences, ill health, medical or dental appointments, leave of absence in term time and punctuality.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance and work with staff in resolving any issues that may be having an impact on their child.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school becomes part of that routine.
- Recognise it is vital that the child receives the same messages at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.

7. The Law

- Parents / carers need to make sure their child attends school regularly and on time. As parents are responsible for this duty in law, they will be breaking the law if they do not do this and there is no good reason for missing school.
- The Academy and Local Authority **want to help parents if there is a problem**. If attendance does not improve or parents do not accept help and support offered, the Local Authority may issue parents with a warning notice, Penalty Notice or ask them to attend an interview to be asked questions about whether they have broken the law.
- If parents go to court and are found guilty of an offence, they could be fined up to £1,000 for a less serious offence or up to £2,500 if the law breaking is more serious. **In very serious cases, the court may involve the probation service or consider up to 3 months in prison.**

8. Attendance Procedures

a) On the first day of absence and any further absence

- If a child is ill or is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the main office giving a reason for the absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about the reason why.
- Doctors and dentists appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, a student should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. It is an expectation that a student should return to school following the appointment, unless the Academy are advised otherwise. Any student who is absent will be issued with a 'Catch Up Card' on their return. *Please see appendix 2.* The expectation is that the student will complete all work missed within a period of one week. Support will be provided, where necessary, to achieve this.

b) Periods of extended absence

- If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received then the school will contact home to verify the absence. Heads of Learning will intervene to discuss this with parents/carers.
- If the school receives no reason for absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action such as referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and possibly a fixed penalty notice (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence taken during term time).
- At the end of each half term the main office will use its computer system to analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to frequent hospital appointments and/or long term medical needs).

c) Help & Support:

- If help is needed with attendance, it is important that a parent or carer talk to the Academy about the issues as soon as possible. They may be requested to attend a meeting in school to talk about the problems and to put a plan in place to help, including targets for improvements to be made. *Please see appendix 3.* Sometimes, school may need to involve other services to help.

d) Communication:

- The school will always try to communicate with parents / carers regarding their child's attendance if it declines. This communication may involve explaining that attendance is a cause for concern by letter, making telephone calls, texts and inviting parents / carers to attend a meeting in school, depending on the circumstances. The school will work with parents and carers to discuss ways that support can be offered to improve the situation. *Please see appendix 4 to understand the flow of communication.*

e) Enforcement Action:

- If, following the Academy's attempts to intervene there is no significant improvement and no good reasons for absences (i.e. absences are not supported by relevant evidence), or parents/carers have not co-operated with the school's attempts to improve the situation the Academy will consider referring the matter to the Local Authority for enforcement action. *Please see appendix 5 to see at which point enforcement will take place.*
- The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. If a child misses school for a significant period because of illness, or if the Academy does not know of any serious health issue that would mean a child could miss school, the Academy may ask parents / carers to provide medical evidence to authorise absences.

As an Academy we are committed to supporting each student effectively, to ensure that they receive the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

f) Punctuality

- Registration time is at 08.55am and 13.20pm. It is important for all students to be on time as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for the individual and for the remainder of the class. If a student arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any student arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (N) until a valid reason is given. A number of these marks can also contribute a further escalation of interventions which may lead to a to a fixed penalty notice being issued. If there is persistent lateness parents/ carers will be informed at intervals by letter. *Please see appendix 6.* For students that are persistently late to school, parent / carer's will be informed and targets set. If there is no improvement over a 12 week school period parents / carers will be notified that any lateness will now be recorded as a U code. In a 12 week school period, 14 sessions (7 days) of U codes can lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

g) Leave of Absence in Term Time

- Head teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The Academy will consider each request of absence individually. This will take into account the circumstances, such as the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the student's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time e.g. termly tests.
- An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. *Please see appendix 7.* Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. As stated in the most recent DFE guidance on attendance, if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.

9. Children Missing from Education:

- If a student moves from the area and their whereabouts are unknown, the Academy can legally remove a child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is vital that parents / carers keep the Academy informed of any change of details/circumstances and regularly update any change in information. A child may be at risk of losing their school place if their whereabouts are not known.
- It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if parents / carers are leaving the area, details are provided of where and how they can be contacted. If parents / carers do not do this and the school is unable to trace a child, this would be treated as a safeguarding matter.

ATTENDANCE

98% – 100%	Outstanding
97%	Excellent
95% – 96.9%	Good
91% - 93%	Below average
90% – 90.9%	Requires improvement
90% and below	Unsatisfactory – considered as an persistent absentee by government guidelines

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS FOR ATTENDANCE WILL BE 95% AND ABOVE AND WILL NOT LOOK FAVOURABLY ON STUDENTS WITH POOR ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS



Student Absence – CATCH UP sheet for students who have missed a day of school attendance

Student name:	Day / Date of absence:
Head of Year:	

Period	Subject	Work Issued staff signature	Work Completed staff signature
1			
2			
3			
4			
6			
7			

- *Please visit all the teachers for the lessons missed as a result of your absence
- *You need to take this back and have them sign it to say the work has been completed
- *You need to take the completed form to the Heads of Learning room at 3.20 on a Friday
- *If all signatures are completed, your card will be collected and you will go home. If not, you will join the CATCH UP session in the Learning Centre

Dear Parent

Your child was absent from school recently.

Absence can have a massive impact on children understanding their learning and maintaining continuity of comprehension. In order to ensure that they do not fall any further behind in certain subjects, as a result of absence, they are to immediately see those teachers whose lessons they missed and establish what needs to be completed to catch up. The teacher will sign this card (see reverse) *at the point of giving* the missed work **and then again once the completed work has been observed by them to be of a satisfactory standard**. This second signature should be gained before Friday afternoon.

Your son / daughter is required to **present this card at 3.20pm** to their Head of Learning on Friday, fully signed by all staff affected by this absence.

If they cannot present a signed off card they will be expected to stay in supervised 'Catch Up' in the Learning Centre on that Friday afternoon with a Head of Learning and a member of the Leadership Team. That will be the reason for your child arriving home late on Friday

Please remind your child that the onus is on them to see the relevant teachers as soon as possible, complete the work over the next couple of days and get a second signature on this card. They also need to remember to come to the Learning Centre to show the card before they go home on Friday afternoon.

Please make alternative collection / travel arrangements for your child should they fail to 'Catch Up' after this particular absence from school.

If you have any concerns about this endeavour to help your child 'keep up' at Woodham Academy, please contact their Head of Learning.

S. McGinney E Kell P. Groves N. Spoor V. Fawcett



Durham County Council - Attendance Improvement Team

Attendance Planning Meeting / Support Plan / Parent Contract

Meeting Venue		Date			
Present at Meeting					
Child's Name (1)		DoB		School	
Child's Name (2)		DoB		School	
Child's Name (3)		DoB		School	
Adult with P.R. (1)		DoB		Attended Meeting?	Y / N Reasons for non-attendance?
Adult with P.R. (2)		DoB		Attended Meeting?	Y / N Reasons for non-attendance?

Background to case and Interventions taken to date to address attendance issues:

Summary / Notes of meeting discussion:

Support Plan / Expectations / Parent Contract

	Actions / Targets / Expectations	Who will carry out?	When?
1	<u>Target:</u>		
2	To notify school on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend, the reason for the absence and the child's expected date of return to school.		
3a	<u>If reason provided for frequency and extent of absences is ill health but unsupported by a diagnosis / evidence of the ill health:</u> To provide evidence to school to support future absences due to ill health i.e. GP appointment card / sight of medication with child's name and date on it, medical note.		
3b	To provide consent for to liaise with school nurse / other medical practitioner regarding the issues.		
4			
5			
6			

I understand that my signature indicates that I have agreed to a contract and to carry out and adhere to the actions contained within it. I can confirm that the actions contained within the contract are reasonable and within my capability to carry out.

Adult with P.R. Signature		Print Name		Date	
Adult with P.R. Signature		Print Name		Date	
School / Agency Signature		Print Name		Date	
School / Agency Signature		Print Name		Date	

Whilst entry into a contract is voluntary, any refusal to enter into, or sign a contract may be used as evidence in future legal proceedings.

Appendix 4

Letter AO1

Date

Parents name/address

Dear Parent / Carer

Name : xxx D.O.B. : xxxx

In accordance with Woodham's attendance policy, the school will monitor carefully any student whose attendance falls below 94%.

The attendance of your child over this academic year to date is XX%. We will therefore continue to monitor the attendance of your son/daughter. We understand there may at times be unavoidable and/or genuine reasons for your child's absences of which the school should be informed as soon as possible. However, irregular school attendance may have a serious impact on your child's academic progress if it is allowed to continue and you as a parent are legally responsible to ensure that your son/daughter's regular and punctual attendance is maintained.

Should you have concerns over this issue, please do not hesitate to contact school to discuss any support which can be offered.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Cox
Attendance Manager

Letter AO2

DATE

Parents name / address

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Date of Birth:

As you are aware we are concerned with XXXXX's level of attendance at school. I am writing to invite you to an Attendance Planning Meeting with your child's Head of Learning to discuss XXX's attendance which is currently at XX %. The meeting is arranged for XXX at XXam/pm at Woodham.

Woodham Academy has written to you on XX.XX.XX to inform you that XXX's attendance is below the expected level and there has been little or no improvement. The aim of the meeting is to discuss why XX has been absent from school and to put in place an action plan to support you and XXX to improve their school attendance. Following the meeting, XXX's attendance will be closely monitored for xx weeks.

It is important you attend this meeting as failure to do so will result in a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Team. If the above date is not convenient please contact school to arrange an alternative time.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Cox
Attendance Manager

Letter AO3

Date

The Parent(s)/Carer of

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Student..... Tutor..... Attendance..... %

Further to the recent planning meeting, please see attached for the attendance targets which have been set. Referring to expectation 3a – medical evidence, please be advised that evidence can include

- an appointment card bearing your child's name
- the prescribed and labelled medication or the dispensing package clearly labelled
- correspondence from hospital

You are not required to produce a medical certificate or an individual letter from your GP.

Please be aware that absence without the support of medical evidence will be recorded as unauthorised. For your information please find enclosed a local authority leaflet.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further then please contact your child's Head of Learning.

Yours sincerely

Ms P Hall
Assistant Headteacher/Director of Student Support

Letter AO4

Date

The Parent(s)/Carer of

Dear Parent/Carer

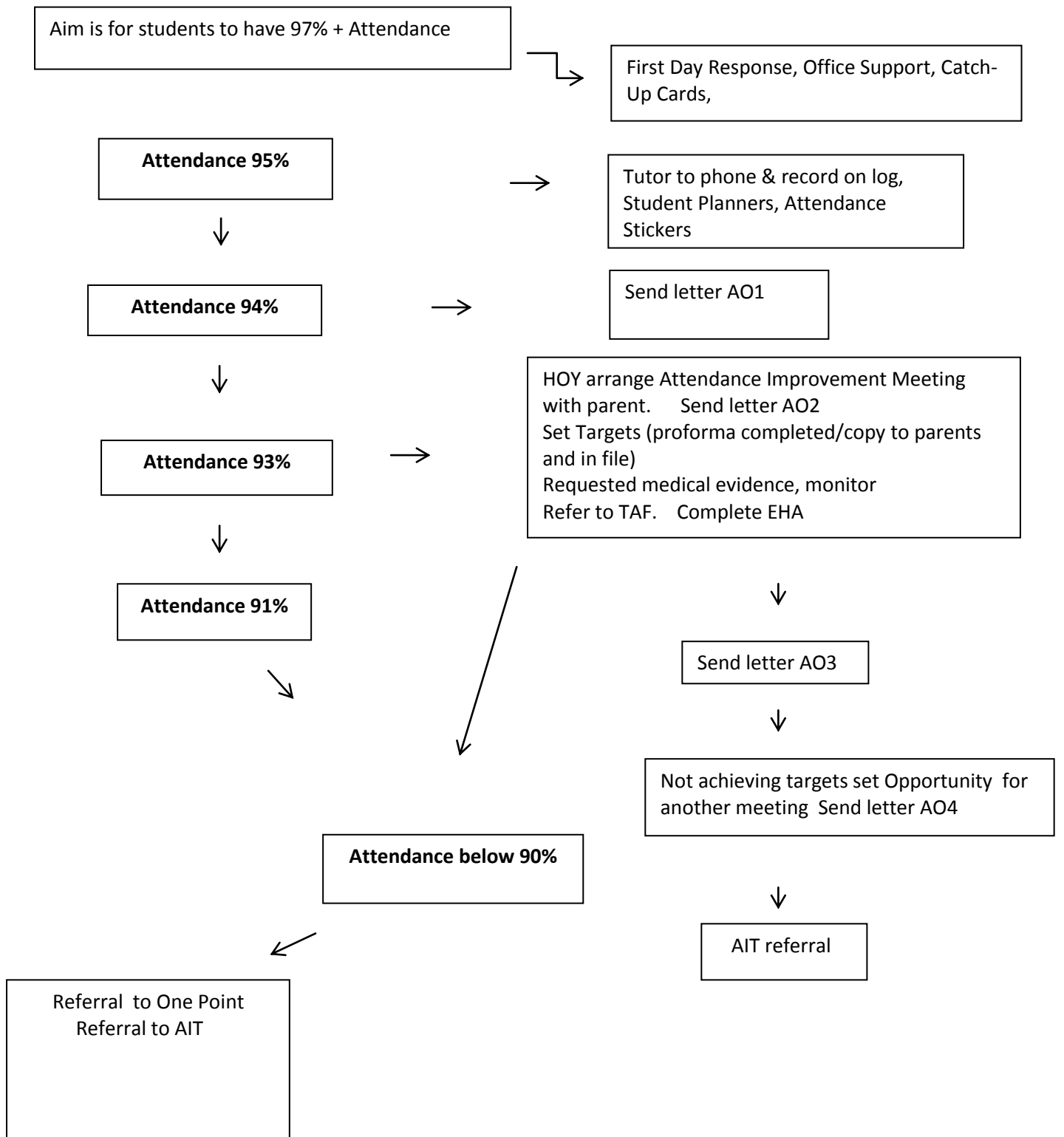
Re: Student..... Tutor..... Attendance..... %

As your child has failed to meet the attendance targets set, I wish to make you aware that the matter is now being referred to the Attendance Improvement Team. Enclosed you will find a Local Authority information leaflet for parents regarding poor attendance at school.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further then please contact your child's Head of Learning.

Yours sincerely

Ms P Hall
Assistant Headteacher/Director of Student Support



Appendix 6

Date

Name / Address

Dear

Re xxxxxxxxx Tutor xxxx

During a routine attendance audit it has been noted that (name) has been late on xx separate occasions, this equates to a total of xx% during the last academic year. If this was marked as unauthorised absence it would drop the overall percentage to xx%.

Persistent lateness is disruptive to both your child's education and to other pupils in the class. Studies show that being just 5 minutes late every day during the academic year equates to 3 full days of lost learning and that as few as 19 missed days over the school year reduces your child's chances of success and GCSE results could drop by one grade across all subjects.

Please be aware that the Local Authority can take legal action against parents/guardian of those children who frequently arrive late to school and that any lateness after the register has closed is classed as unauthorised absence. Frequent and persistent lateness could result in a referral to Durham County Council's School Attendance Enforcement Team. Please refer to the enclosed advice to parents and carers leaflet.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact school to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Pam Hall
Director of Student Support/Assistant Headteacher



SPECIAL REQUEST FOR STUDENT LEAVE DURING TERM TIME

I wish to apply to take my son/daughter out of school on the following dates:

TOTAL NUMBER OF DAYS Excluding weekends:

First date of absence:

Return to school date:.....

% Attendance

office use only

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With effect from September 2013 Woodham Academy is no longer able to grant requests for leave of absence during term time.* All leave/holiday taken during term time will be recorded within individual student records as unauthorised absence. Extended periods of unauthorised absence may result in a penalty notice. Should you have any questions please contact Ms P Hall, Director of Student Support.

To apply for special dispensation please complete and return this form together with a letter of explanation for your request for the attention of The Headteacher.

Name of Student: Tutor Group:

Signature of Parent: Tel

Address:

*Amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove the reference to family holiday and extended leave for students during term time