

Woodley CofE Primary School



Our Vision

At Woodley C of E each person is unique and accepted as a child of God. Through strong Christian values and our BRIGHT attitudes to learning, we inspire hearts and minds to create life-long learners, who have the skills, knowledge and understanding to shine brightly in the world.

“Let your light shine before others.” Matthew 5:16

Attendance Policy (Including Children Missing in Education)

Responsibility of:	Leadership and Management Committee
Type of Policy:	School Policy
Reviewed:	Bi-Annually
Date of Review:	April 2024
Date of next Review:	April 2025

Version	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1	April 2022	Added regarding signed parental permission for Year 6 children to walk home alone.
2	April 2023	Updated following new Government guidance
3	April 2024	Updated time for parents to inform school of absences

Alternative formats available	email enlarged print audio
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Chair of Governors:

Head Teacher:

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1. Commitment to Attendance

All staff at Woodley CofE Primary School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, children, governors and the Local Authority, to provide an education of the highest standard for all our children.

Regular attendance is essential to achieving this. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we encourage parents to ensure their children achieve the maximum possible attendance, and any issues that may prevent this are brought to the attention of school staff promptly. Clear expectations of daily attendance and routines that support children to achieve this, at an early age, will help children throughout their school life.

Whilst every child has a right to a full-time education and we have high attendance expectations for all children, we will ensure this policy is applied fairly and consistently while considering the individual needs of children and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In implementing this policy, school will take into consideration the obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Reasons for individual children's absence is shared daily with all staff and everyone is committed to improving school attendance at Woodley CofE Primary School.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Governing Body

The Governing Body 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
- regularly review attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis
- hold the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Responsibilities of the Strategic Attendance Governor

- Meet termly with the Attendance Lead and Attendance Officer within school to build an effective relationship that allows for appropriate support and challenge.
- Review achievement of attendance targets at different levels
- Report once a term to the Full Governing Body
- Ensure the Full Governing Body is aware of the attendance levels and the level of persistent absence in school
- Ensure school keeps admission and attendance registers in accordance with regulations
- Ensure clear systems are in place to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils as per the Attendance Policy.

Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Lead

- Oversee, direct, and coordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance.
- Draw comparisons with national data.
- Use data to understand the impact of interventions.
- Ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school.

- Ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the Head Teacher.

Responsibility of the Attendance Officer

- Work under the clear direction of the Attendance Lead.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's/carer's concerns
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents/carers when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received by 8.50am, to explain the absence
- Follow up on all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long-term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- Regularly inform parents/carers of the percentage attendance of all children (parent's evenings, end-of-year reports, etc.)
- Make initial inquiries regarding children who are not attending regularly by writing to parents. Letters will be issued in the following order:
Letter 1 – Inform parents of current attendance % and offer an opportunity to meet with the school to discuss any concerns, if parents feel it is needed.
Letter 2 – Inform parents of the current attendance % and request parents meet with the school to discuss concerns.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution, or an application for an Education Supervision Order
- Notify the Education Welfare Service after 10 days of unexplained absence and after 15 days of consecutive sickness absence.

Responsibilities of the classroom staff/class teacher

- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Ensure all children are registered correctly.
- Promote good attendance.
- Liaise with the Attendance Lead/Attendance Officer on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Support children to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers:

- Encourage daily school attendance throughout the academic year and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- Advise school by 8.50 am, on the first and any subsequent days, if their child is going to be absent, giving the reason for absence.
- Arrange non-urgent medical and dental appointments outside school hours or during the school holidays.

- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**, in which case Leave of Absence must be requested in advance.
- Contact the school promptly should a problem occur that may prevent their child from attending school.
- Notify the school of any changes in home circumstances that might affect their child.
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to phone numbers, home addresses, or emergency contact details.

Definition of a Parent:

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child (having care of a child means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child) is considered to be a parent in education law

Responsibilities of Children:

- Attend school every day unless they are prevented from doing so by unavoidable reasons or they have been granted Leave of Absence.
- Arrive at school on time.
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day.
- Talk to their parent/carer, class teacher, or an appropriate member of staff if they are worried about anything that may affect their school attendance.

3. Recording Attendance

- We will keep an attendance register, and place all children on this register.
- School will open at 8.40am for a rolling start with all children expected to be in school by 8.50am.
- The register will be completed at the start of the school day and at the beginning of the afternoon session.
- The register will be kept open until 9.20am for the morning session and 13.10pm for the afternoon session.

See Appendix 2 for an explanation of attendance codes.

4. Reporting Absence

- A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the reason for absence is always required.
- If a child is absent, parents/carers must contact the school and report a reason for absence by 8.50am and every subsequent day thereafter. This can be via the child absence answer machine, email, or by speaking to a member of the school staff.
- If your child is absent we will telephone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we have a duty of care to ensure your child's safety.
- If contact cannot be made then the Attendance Lead may ask that a home visit is carried out.

- If a child has an unexplained absence for 10 days and contact has not been established with the parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing in education. Children's Services will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

5. Persistent Absence

If your child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absences thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department of Education. Any student who is persistently absent will be monitored and put on an action plan, if required. The Attendance Lead and Attendance Officer will meet with families whose attendance causes concern. Where necessary, home visits are made to discuss ways attendance could be improved and the barriers that may need removing.

This may include:

- Agreeing on an attendance support plan
- Signposting to outside agencies

If your child is persistently absent and the school feels this is becoming an issue, you will be required to provide medical evidence each time your child is absent. Failure to do this will lead to the absence not being authorised. Evidence can include, GP texts, NHS texts, emails or letters from Health Care Professionals, hospital letters, or appointment cards.

If you would like the school to contact medical professionals to help with this, please complete Appendix 3.

6. Severely Persistent Absence

If your child misses 50% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as severely persistent absentees. Woodley CofE Primary School works alongside the Educational Welfare Officer who monitors closely all severely persistent cases.

7. Children Leaving During the School Day

- Children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- When a child is being collected from school during the school day, parents/carers are requested to report to the school office before the child is allowed to leave the site.
- Parents/carers should arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. Parents/carers are requested to complete a Medical Appointment Form giving the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, and the expected return time.
- Children must be signed out at reception on leaving the school and signed back in on their return.

- If a child leaves the school site without permission their parents/carers will be contacted. Should the school be unable to contact the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the child as a missing person or contact Social Services.
- No child will be allowed to walk home alone during the school day unless it is an exceptional circumstance and only then with the Head Teacher's authorisation, if the child is in Year 6.

8. Children Leaving at the end of the Day

- When children enter Year 6 it is recognised that parents/carers may wish to start to develop a child's independence by allowing them to walk to and from school without an adult. Signed parental permission must be received before any Year 6 child will be allowed to walk home alone. This agreement is made on the understanding that the child will be going straight home from school.
- If another adult is collecting your child, other than the authorised adults known to the school, then parents must contact the school office and inform school who will be collecting the child. If no contact is made then the school office will phone to get authorisation before releasing the child.
- All children are expected to be picked up promptly at the end of the day.
- The school day finishes at 3.20pm for FS2/KS1 (Foundation, Year 1 and Year 2) children, 3.25pm for LKS2 (Year 3 and 4) children and 3.30pm for UKS2 (Year 5 and 6) children.

9. Punctuality/Lateness

It is crucial that children arrive at school on time for registration at the beginning of the day. Lateness in school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount therefore that all children arrive at school on time. For school children and parents/carers, the grounds are open at 8.30am and the school building opens at 8.40am.

- Registration takes place at 8.50am and children who arrive after 8.50am will be recorded as late to school
- Registers close at 9.20am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (This could lead to prosecution by the local authority if the problem persists)
- All lateness is recorded daily.
- Persistent lateness by a child will initially be followed up by school staff and if not resolved will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

10. Leave of Absence

- The school holiday dates, INSET days, and SATs dates are published with sufficient notice
- Only in "exceptional" circumstances will leave of absence in term time be authorised. This is as per current Department for Education guidance.
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Education Welfare Service may be notified.

- A Leave of Absence Form must be completed and passed to the school office before any absence is taken. Leave of Absence Forms can be found on the school website <https://www.woodleyceprimary.co.uk/web/forms/39008> or via the school office.
- Any absence of five days or more, not considered exceptional circumstances, will be shared with the Local Authority and could result in a fine. See further information below.

11. Penalty Notices for Holidays

- The Head Teacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when children are taken out of school for five or more days' unauthorised holiday. Penalty Notices are issued per parent, per child
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notices is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for the original offence of non-school attendance.

12. Penalty Notices

In addition to Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised leave, Penalty Notices may also be issued if a parent/carers fails to ensure regular school attendance.

The Penalty Notice Code of Conduct covers the following unauthorised absences:

- The deliberate taking of a holiday in term time without/against school permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parents/carers understood that permission had not/would not be given) and where this has created unauthorised absence of at least 10 sessions (5 days or more) whether consecutively or not, in a ten-school week period, will result in the issuing of a penalty notice.
- Overt truancy (including children caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Unauthorised holidays in term-time of 5 days or more
- Excessive delayed return from authorised extended holidays without prior school agreement – i.e. 2 days
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed) i.e. 10 occasions in a 10-week school week period.
- Less than 80% attendance, the absences being unauthorised; during a 4-school week period.
- A child having been excluded from a Wokingham school, being found present in a public place, during school hours, without reasonable justification.

13. Failure to ensure regular school attendance

If concerns regarding attendance arise, the Attendance Officer will contact the parent/carers to resolve any issues that may be preventing irregular school attendance. Should no improvement be seen or the concerns remain, the matter will be escalated to senior staff in the school. Where all attempts to improve attendance have been exhausted, the school will refer to the Education Welfare Service.

Section 444 of the Education Act, 1996, says:

“If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered child at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offense”.

If the reasons given for your child’s irregular school attendance are not satisfactory, then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for failure to comply with the Law. This may result in:

- A Fixed Penalty Notice payable up to **£120** fine
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000**.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to **£2,500 and/or sentenced to a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months**.

14.Supporting Attendance

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. 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.

Contact the Attendance Officer immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, or family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child’s reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

Every School Day Counts

Attendance during the school year	Equates to days absence	Which is approximately
97%	6 days	1 week
94%	10 days	2 weeks
90%	19 days	4 weeks
85%	29 days	6 weeks
80%	38 days	8 weeks
75%	48 days	10 weeks
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks

15.Changing Schools

It is important that if parents/carers decide to send their child to a different school, they must inform the school in writing as soon as possible. A child will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the child will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- A new home address

The child's school records will then be sent to the new school and a notification sent to the Local Authority. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to Education Welfare Service following 'reasonable efforts' to contact the family and after four weeks the child will be registered on the S2S website as a child missing education.

16. Elective Home Education

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their children receive a suitable full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The law allows parents/carers to choose to educate children at home instead of sending them to school. This is known as Elective Home Education (EHE).

Should parents/carers wish to follow this route they are required to put this in writing to the Head Teacher requesting that their child is removed from the school roll.

The school will then inform the EHE Officer who will contact the family and ensure that education is 'suitable and efficient'.

17. Children Missing in Education

Children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school or as being Home Educated are considered Children Missing in Education.

Children missing in education are:

- Children whose whereabouts are known but do not have any educational provision in place
- Children whose whereabouts are unknown and therefore so is their educational provision

If a child does not attend school for 20 consecutive sessions (10 school days) or more then they are considered missing in education and the school have to report this to the local authority. A child who does not attend school for this amount of time, without a valid reason, may risk losing their school place.

See appendix 1.

18. Key Contacts

Mrs Louisa Gurney, Head Teacher, is the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school and can be contacted at head@wcofe.com

The first point of call to report your child's absence is the main office number on 0118 969 3246 and leave a message on the absence answer machine. Please make sure you leave your child's name, class, and a reason for absence. Please speak slowly and clearly.

For attendance queries and information please contact the Attendance Officer, Mrs Miranda Smith at msmith@wcofe.com

19.Links with other policies

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Behaviour Policy

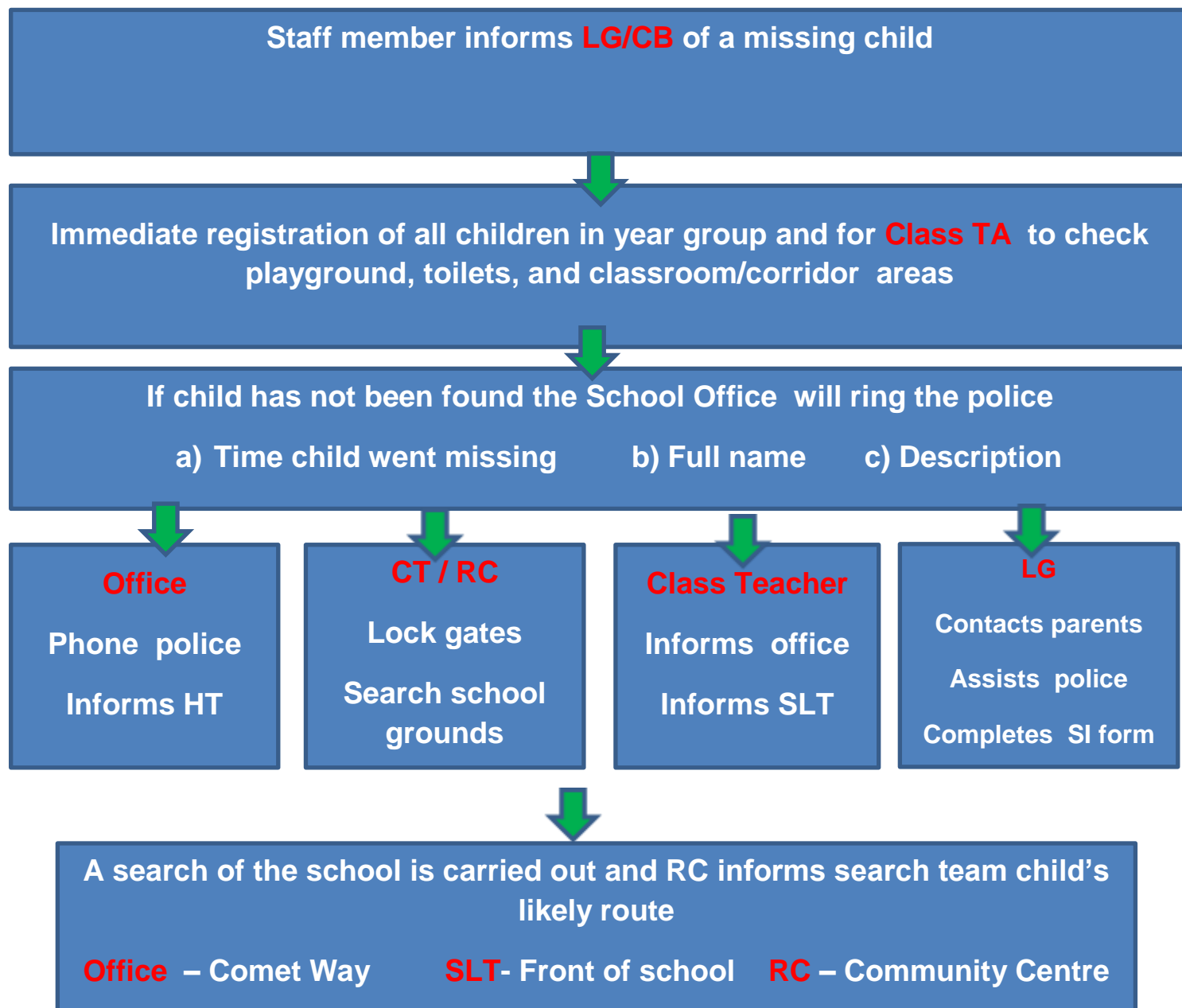
Educational Visits Policy

Fire, Safety and Evacuation Policy

Lock Down Policy

Appendix 1 – Protocol for a missing child in school

At Woodley CofE we will implement this protocol if a child has not been seen by a member of staff within 5 minutes. They remain a missing child until seen by a staff member.



*This information will need to be communicated to any new or cover staff

Appendix 2 – Attendance Codes

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

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil 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 pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil 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 pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 3 – Authorisation to contact medical professional



WOODLEY

CofE Primary School

CONTACT

Hurricane Way
Woodley
RG5 4UX
Tel: 0118 969 3246
admin@wcofe.com

Head Teacher: Mrs Louisa Gurney
BA(Hons) NPQH

Date:

Child's Name:

Permission to Contact Medical Professional

I give permission for Woodley CofE Primary School to contact the below medical professional regarding my child's medical condition.

Name of GP/Consultant:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Email:

Signed:

Date:

Print Name:

Relationship to child: