

ATTENDANCE POLICY

FOREST OAK SCHOOL



Approved by:
Last Reviewed on:
Next review due by:

Date:

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I. 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 pupil 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 pupils have the support in place to attend school.

2. 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 (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to and is in line with:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- SEN Code of Practice

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

The governing board 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 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

3.2 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 pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 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 and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Lyndsay Powers and can be contacted via email at s500lpowers@forest-oak.solihull.sch.uk or via the school office on 0121 717 0088

3.4 The office and admin staff

The school office is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the SLT in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.5 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, (unless by prior arrangement with Miss Powers in extenuating circumstances) 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.

3.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Take responsibility for their own attendance, as age and understanding appropriate, addressing attendance issues and engaging with support offered

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils 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 pupil 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 of the person who made the amendment

See appendix I for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil 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.

Pupils must arrive in school 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 9:00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:55pm and will be kept open until 2:15pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff. Parents/carers should leave a message on the pupil absence line. (see also section 7).

Even if a direct message has been sent to the class staff on DoJo, it is expected and in line with school policy that parents/carers contact the school office.

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

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

A request for medical evidence will be made at the discretion of the DSL responsible for attendance or the headteacher.

If necessary, further advice and guidance will be sought from the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion team.

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

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

•Any pupil who arrives at school after 8:40am must sign in at the main office. They must be entered in the late book and give a reason for the late arrival. They will be issued with a 'late slip' to be handed to their class teacher.

Late slips are also copied and kept as a record.

This ensures that class staff know that the pupil's late arrival has been added to the register, and that any necessary reasons for their lateness have been established.

If pupils are persistently late for school, class staff in the first instance will speak to both the pupil, (dependent upon the child's age and understanding), and the parent/carer to establish the reason for the lateness, and whether any support is required from school or other agencies.

This will then be followed by the Family Support Worker and other members of the pastoral support team.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

On Day 1, if we have not received communication from parents by 10:00 am, an automated text message will be sent to the first priority contact, requesting a reason for your child's absence from school. If a response **is not received** to this message, a phone call will be made by the school office to ascertain the cause of the absence.

If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may need to contact other agencies, as appropriate, if we are concerned about the welfare of the child.

The authorisation of the absence is at the discretion of the Headteacher, and this will be ascertained from the information and evidence provided as to why the child is absent from school.

On Day 2, and again on every day that the child is absent from school without parental communication, a text message and phone call will be sent from the school office if we have not received communication as to why the pupil is absent from school.

On Day 3, if there is still no communication from the family, a safe and well-being call will be made by a member of the class team. Dependent upon the outcome of this call, a safe and well-being visit will be made by the Family Support Worker.

If school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, we may need to contact other agencies, as appropriate, if we are concerned about the welfare of the child.

If on Day 3 we have still received no contact as to why your child is not in school, it will also be logged as a concern that not only are we unaware as to your child's well-being, we are concerned regarding a lack of communication and engagement with school.

If your child is absent from school for a longer period of time, even for a legitimate reason, we will remain in contact with you and there will be safe and well-being calls and visits as appropriate.

Even if your child has been medically advised not to attend school for a period of time, due to illness or a hospital stay, we would greatly appreciate regular contact from you to the class team, to update us as to the physical welfare and emotional well-being of your child.

If absence and attendance concerns persist, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

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

This will be via written reports at the end of each term, in the pupils' annual review and in PEP meetings for Looked After Children.

Attendance will be reported more frequently should we have cause for concern.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil 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 pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an event that is above and beyond normal circumstances

The Headteacher considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account 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 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, available from the school office.

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness (including mental 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 pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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 agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

If the Headteacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences a letter confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer

If the Headteacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional, the leave of absence will not be authorised. A letter informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence been taken will be sent to each parent.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers 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/carers 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 rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has **not** been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or not.

This is in line with the Solihull MBC **Education Enforcement Leave of Absence Policy**

For further information, they can be contacted on : 0121 779 1737

Email: educationenforcement@solihull.gov.uk

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

A positive approach to excellent will be promoted across the school, and age appropriate information will be shared with pupils as to the impact of high levels of absence from school.

Whilst we do not believe that children should be sanctioned or disadvantaged for poor health or having disabilities which necessitate medical conditions, at all times we encourage pupils to attend school every day that they are able, and highlight improvements and efforts made with regard to school attendance.

7. Attendance Monitoring

The attendance of pupils at Forest Oak is monitored in the first instance by class staff, supported by admin staff. The class staff have excellent relationships with the pupils and their families and are in the best position to identify and resolve issues in the early stages.

If concerns continue, class staff are further supported by the Family Support Worker, the Learning Mentor, the Senior Lead for Mental Health and the Senior Leadership team.

If deemed appropriate, external agencies may also offer support and at the discretion of the SLT lead for attendance, referrals and requests for advice can be made to the Local Authority Inclusion team.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

Forest Oak will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-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 governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

Forest Oak will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

Forest Oak will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils 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

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

Forest Oak will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school 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

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Lyndsay Powers, DSL with responsibility for Attendance At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Educational Visits Policy

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

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

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