



ATTENDANCE POLICY

NON STATUTORY

OWNER:	Home School Link Worker
COMMITTEE:	Full Governing Body
DATE OF LAST REVIEW:	Spring 2023
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	Spring 2025

Attendance Policy

Introduction

This policy has been developed for Furzefield Primary School in partnership with staff, parents, pupils, governors and the Inclusion Service to encourage good attendance for all pupils.

This policy sets out the rationale, our aims and the strategies that will be used to ensure all pupils achieve maximum attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. It is hoped that pupils will achieve 100% attendance but when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

Parental responsibility and the law

Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a penalty notice.

Roles and Responsibilities

Furzefield Primary School has a Home-School Agreement with parents and carers. This agreement outlines how the school and parents or carers work in partnership for the benefit of children. Supporting good attendance is a part of the agreement and parents are expected to ensure that their child or children attend/s school regularly.

Parents/carers role is to:

- Ensure that children go to school regularly, arrive and are collected on time and do not miss school for unacceptable reasons
- help children to understand the importance of going to school and make it clear that absences from school for no good reason will not be supported
- praise children for good or improved attendance
- ensure that the school is aware of any issues or problems that are affecting attendance and work with the school to resolve these
- to inform the school on the first day of absence by 9am and to inform the school as to their well being each day they are absent.
- make every effort to ensure all appointments are made outside school time. The school must be informed of any appointments made in school time. Written evidence will be required.

- assist children at home in catching up on missed work
- take family holidays during school holidays
(There is no entitlement for a parent to take children away during term time.)

All staff are to:

Actively encourage good attendance and punctuality. Discuss with parents reasons for absence or lateness.

Governing Body and Head Teacher roles are to:

Promote the attendance policy and ensure that it is implemented effectively. Ensure that school provides a system to reward good attendance and punctuality.

Registers

Under the provision of The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006² the school must keep an admission register and an attendance register.

Registration and Lateness

It is expected that children will arrive at school on time. The school day begins at 8.50am when the attendance register will be taken. If pupils arrive at school after the register has been taken, a late mark will be recorded. The register will close at 9.00am, and if a child arrives after 9.20am without a valid explanation e.g. Doctors appointment, it will be recorded as 'late after close of register' and counted as an unauthorised absence for the morning session. The pupil's name and the time of arrival will be recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill. There is also a register in the afternoon and children who are absent in the morning are still able to come in if they are feeling well enough to attend the afternoon session.

Responding to Non-Attendance

Initial actions

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school as soon as possible that morning if a child will be absent for any reason.

If we do not hear from the parent/carer the school will endeavour to contact them that day.

If there is no response the school will try to contact the parent/carer on every subsequent day of absence. If we are still unable to contact the parent/carer, a home visit will be undertaken to establish the wellbeing of the child. On the child's return to school if no reason has been given for the absence, the absence will be unauthorised. This may lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued.

In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) 2006², all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority.

Frequent Absence

Whilst a child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they may be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are to be resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure by excusing them from attending school. This gives the impression that attendance is not important and usually makes things worse.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will make every effort to work with the family to improve attendance through:

- Home School Link Worker will contact the family and establish reasons for absences.
- Any issues arising will be discussed with the child within school and additional support offered where required.
- Letter sent to parents stating concerns.
- Meeting at school with the Home School Link Worker, a member of the Senior Leadership Team and other professionals if required.

The LA Inclusion Officer (EWO) meets with the Home School Link Worker on a regular basis to discuss attendance concerns. The LA Inclusion Officer (EWO) will decide if the matter should be taken further.

Persistent Absence (PA)

The Department for Education defines that a pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Any absence has an impact on a child's educational achievement and the school needs parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The Department for Education and the Local Authority monitor the levels of persistently absent children, and levels of absence in all schools.

Attendance of all pupils is tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. We also combine this information with academic mentoring and achievement as evidence shows that poor attendance at school affects academic attainment.

Parents will be informed termly of their child's attendance.

Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of each parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 per child per parent if paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996¹.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The LA Inclusion Service may issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Inclusion Officers. This will be considered when a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions in the previous 6 school weeks, which may include a pupil arriving late after close of registration. Before a penalty notice is issued, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice.

Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given.

Parents of pupils identified by Police and Inclusion Officers when engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

If a child is excluded from school, Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours.

This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent/carer liable to a Penalty Notice. (Alternative education provision will be made available from the sixth day of any exclusion.)

How will we encourage good attendance?

Furze Field Primary School will encourage good attendance by providing teaching and learning environments that are welcoming, secure and stimulating. Pupils are respected and valued as individuals, and supported to achieve. Wherever possible, additional support will be provided for more vulnerable groups.

We will raise awareness of the importance of attendance by:

- Making pupils aware of their attendance record so that they can take pride in improvement;
- Referring to good attendance in assemblies etc;
- Promoting the importance of good attendance in contacts with parents and carers.

We will incentivise and motivate pupils to value good attendance by:

- Intrinsically motivating pupils through reinforcing the importance of learning and how lifelong learning can help to achieve fulfilment and happiness in later life.
- Giving good attendance a high profile in school through:
 - termly attendance assemblies, rewarding pupils with 100% attendance.
 - Weekly attendance cup to the two classes with the highest attendance each week.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school will collect, analyse and report on attendance data to the Governing Body on a termly basis. A target for improving attendance rates is set annually, and evaluation of the success of the attendance policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Consultation

This policy is the result of consultation with key agencies and individuals. It will be reviewed every two years.

References

1. Education Act 1996 [Education Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)
2. Government Policy: The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made>
Amendment 2016 <http://legislation.data.gov.uk/uksi/2016/792/made/data.pdf>
3. Government Guidance: Department for Education – School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures 2015 (as updated) (This guidance includes all government policies that support parental responsibility to ensure good attendance)
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/581539/School_attendance_parental_responsibility_measures_statutory_guidance.pdf
Summary of legal action: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>