



Foxton Primary School

Attendance Policy

Date:	July 2023
Reviewed by:	Janet Muir, Anita Armitage, Lisa Murphy
Next Review date:	July 2024
Signed:	

Attendance Policy

Principles

Foxton Primary School aims to work together with Parent/Carers and the Local Authority Attendance Officers (LAAOs) to ensure that all children registered at school attend every day and on time, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We aim to improve the achievement of pupils by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality by creating an ethos in which attendance and punctuality are recognised and seen to be valued by the whole school. At the same time, ensuring that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits from an early age. The recognised expected level of attendance at school is 98 - 100% unless pupils have chronic health issues or there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Parent/Carers Responsibilities

Parent/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of statutory school age (term after the child turns five) attend school on a regular and full time basis. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning.

Parent/Carers must:

- Ensure all children registered at Foxton Primary School attend regularly and punctually everyday unless prevented from doing so by illness or medical appointment.
- Inform school in advance of any medical appointments during school time, parents may on occasions be asked to provide supporting medical evidence from the hospital, doctor or dentist, such as appointment details card/letter/text message in relation to the time requested.
- Ensure their child arrives at school in time for registration. Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as unauthorised.
- Inform the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time, which should only be taken if absolutely necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an exceptional circumstance. Any leave taken during term time, that has been unauthorised, could be subject to a penalty notice/fine.
- Report any changes to the contact details to the Office to ensure the school has the most up to date contact information.

Registration

Reception to Year 6:

- The gate to the playground is opened at 8:45am.
- The bell is rung at 8:55am
- The gate to the playground is locked at 9am
- Once the gate to the playground has been locked, entry to the school is via the main entrance.
- Registers are taken at 9am. Once registers have been taken, any pupil who arrives at school after this time will be recorded as L, late on the register.

- Pupils who arrive at school after registers close at 9:30am, will have their lateness recorded as U, unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.

Lateness

Registration takes place at 9am. This is also when the teacher informs the class of their daily timetable of learning and prepares the pupils for the day ahead. Pupils who arrive after the registration period and up to 9:30am will be marked as late. Any pupil who arrives after 9:30am will be marked as an unauthorised late. Children who are persistently late to school will miss a significant amount of their education.

Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, Parent/Carers will initially receive a letter informing them of the school's concerns. This will advise Parent/Carers to speak to a member of staff to help address the issue. Should the lateness continue, Parent/Carers will be invited to a meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

If there is no improvement, despite the school's attempts to address unauthorised absences, a referral could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAO) for pupils who are of statutory school age.

Reporting a Pupil Absence

Parent/Carers must contact school on the first and every subsequent day of absence by 8:55am.

For any pupil not present at the close of registration, and the reason is still unknown, a member of the Office staff will attempt to make contact with the Parent/Carers once the registers have closed.

The member of staff will ring every contact, starting with the priority contact, until a reason for absence is known. Failure to make contact with the Parent/Carers to establish a reason for an absence may result in a welfare check/home visit. Any unexplained absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence if there is no response from a Parent/Carers to an enquiry regarding their child's absence from school.

For absences relating to a medical appointment, supporting medical evidence may be requested to authorise this absence. This can be a text message which clearly identifies who the appointment is for, a letter that is headed from the medical professional or an appointment card. A period of absence will only be authorised in relation to the length of the appointment. Children who fail to return to school within a reasonable time following their medical appointment could result in an am/pm session being unauthorised.

Illness

Children who are unable to attend school due to diarrhoea or vomiting can return after they have been 48 hours clear.

Children with mild coughs, colds, sore throats, sneezing and runny noses who are otherwise well can continue to attend school. However, if they develop a high temperature they should stay at home until their temperature has reduced and are well enough to return to school.

As a school we follow the guidance from the NHS regarding other contagious diseases.

COVID-19

If a pupil tests positive for COVID- 19 and this has been reported to school, the pupil should stay at home and can return to school after 3 days if they feel well enough and do not have a high temperature.

As a school, we are continuing to maintain the good practice of regular handwashing and pupils are encouraged to cough and sneeze into a tissue to help reduce the risk of passing on any infections.

School Responsibilities

All members of the school staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness; with the Head teacher having overall responsibility in the monitoring of attendance and lateness of every pupil. Where there are concerns, parents will always be informed by letter and or telephone conversation and given an opportunity to come into school to meet with designated staff.

The school is aware that there can be many causes and difficulties which can affect school attendance. Therefore, where needed, support strategies with a monitoring period will be put in place to help with these issues and improve the attendance or lateness of a pupil. This might include working with other professionals to offer a plan of support. This is known locally as Early Help. Should a pupil's attendance or lateness continue to be a concern despite the support strategies in place, with no improvement to the expected level set by school, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) for statutory aged pupils. This could result in a penalty notice/fine, or prosecution being issued by Cambridgeshire County Council, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

School Staff

Office staff will aim to contact the Parent/Carers of any pupil who is absent from school and a reason has not been provided once the registers have closed.

Staff will ring the first priority contact number to establish a reason for the absence. If unable to make contact, they will call the next contact until we have been provided with a reason for absence.

If the reason for absence is unknown at the close of registration, staff will:

- Phone the contact numbers provided by the Parent/Carers to enquire about a pupil's absence
- Complete the registers in accordance to the guidelines relating to correct usage of codes
- Leave a message on voicemail requesting parents to contact school regarding their child's absence
- Log the outcome of the phone call on Bromcom – pupil data system
- Inform the School Attendance Officer (Mrs Armitage) should there be a particular concern regarding an individual pupil's attendance or lateness
- If no contact is made, a welfare check/home visit may be made

Attendance Process

Lateness and attendance is monitored daily by the school office, weekly by the Attendance Officer and regularly at Attendance Meetings, involving the School Attendance Officer and Headteacher. Within the meetings they:

- Scrutinise the registers, monitoring authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons provided for pupil absence and lateness.
- Raise concerns with Parent/Carers of identified patterns of lateness with an initial 'Late Letter'.
- Contact parents by telephone, email, or letter to establish a reason for a pupil's absence if reason unknown.
- Raise concerns with Parent/Carers once attendance has fallen below the threshold set of 94%
- Offer support or sign post to other areas of support within the community
- Keep in mind the wider support needs of families and ensure Early Help is offered as soon as possible where needed.
- Liaise with other external organisations in relation to a pupil's attendance and/or lateness.
- Monitor pupils attendance within specific and identified groups
- Monitor pupil absences for those with additional medical needs
- Monitor pupils and follow procedures for pupils 'Child Missing in Education'.
- Follow reporting procedures for parents who have requested to Home Educate their child(ren)
- Follow procedures when deleting a pupil from roll
- Meet with LAAO on the allocated visits to school, who will also monitor the registers and follow up any identified concerns.
- Monitor absences for illness and requests for leave to attend medical appointments.
- Complete a Medical Needs Assessment on pupils with absences of 15 days during the school year
- Monitor and act upon requests for term time leave of absence and ensure Parent/Carers are informed of procedures in relation to authorised/unauthorised leave

Following identification of a child who is under 94% these steps will be taken:

- Step One. A letter advising Parent/Carers of our concerns regarding the level of their child(ren) attendance and/or lateness
- Step Two. Informal contact, to ascertain possible barriers to accessing education and offering support and signposting.
- Step Three. A second letter advising Parent/Carers of our concerns regarding the level of their child(ren) attendance and/or lateness with no improvement in attendance
- Step Four. A formal Attendance Support Meeting to be held in school, with Parent/Carers to discuss concerns and, working together, identifying support which can be offered and signposting. At the meeting the school will be looking to understand any wider support needs which families may have and may suggest starting an Early Help Assessment to ensure the right support is made available for parents, carers and children. Targets will be set to improve the attendance and/or lateness. These targets will be reviewed at the end of an agreed monitoring period.
- Step Five. Should the targets set at step three not be met following a review, despite every attempt by the school to support the family, a request for the issue of a penalty notice/fine

or prosecution could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) for children of statutory school age.

Only the Head teacher may authorise any absence for a legitimate reason, not all absence supported by Parent/Carers will be classified as authorised.

Definitions of Leave:

Foxton Primary School expects attendance at school to be 98 - 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Authorised leave:

- An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as illness, subject to pattern of illness or a medical appointment where supporting medical evidence has been provided to cover the period of absence. However, there is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending where the appointment falls within the school day.
- Religious Observance - only day (s) exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to.
- The leave of absence has been authorised due to a short and exceptional, unavoidable circumstance.
- Authorised Leave is at the Head's discretion.

Unauthorised leave:

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, such as shopping, hair appointments, visiting family or birthdays.
- Medical appointments where supporting evidence of appointment details have not been provided when asked for.
- There has been no reason provided by the Parent/Carers to support an absence.
- Failure to follow school procedures or inform the school when taking a pupil out of school during term time.
- A leave of absence that has not been authorised due to not being considered an exceptional circumstance.

Guidance for Parents – Term Time Leave

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion on head teachers agreeing to term time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken. Parents must complete a Term Time Leave Request form and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their child out of school during the school day.

If the school suspect Term Time Leave has been taken but the parent/carers have not completed a Term Time Leave Request Form, we will write to all parent/carers giving them an opportunity to clarify the reason for absence and provide supporting evidence. A 'Suspected Holiday Letter' may

be sent. Failure to respond to or provide supporting evidence may result in a referral to the Local Authority for unauthorised leave from school.

Exceptional circumstance (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis, such as up to two days absence from school to visit a dying relative, death of a family member, attendance at a funeral or any unavoidable one off event, but the following examples of requests for leave of absence that do not meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance and will not be authorised and could be subject to a penalty notice/fine for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term
- Trip of a life time
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad
- Relatives coming to visit
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance

Penalty Notice

The fine for a penalty notice is £60 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £120 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child (ren) this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

Parent/Carers who take unauthorised leave during term time or whose child has a pattern of unauthorised absence over any 4 week period could be subject to the issue of a penalty notice or prosecution.

The definition of parent in relation to a Penalty Notice includes adults who have day to day care of that child and who lives in the same household (eg. Step parent or Grandparent).

Attendance Policy written in conjunction with: New DfE guidance:

Working Together to Improve School Attendance and Guidance for Schools:

- ▶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf
- ▶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf

APPENDIX 1

EXAMPLE LETTER A – Initial Attendance Concern

Date

Name and address of parent

Dear Parent

Re: Child Name: xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

We have noticed that your child <forename> attendance has deteriorated, I have enclosed a copy of «forename»'s attendance record so that you can view a detailed breakdown of your child's absence from school.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning, and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement.

We will continue to monitor «forename»'s attendance and I look forward to seeing an improvement. If the absence is due to a medical reason please ensure that we have been informed so appropriate support can be put in place.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on «forename» attending school regularly or if you are concerned about your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me. However, it does no harm in speaking with the teacher or attendance team, because together we can make a difference.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Enc Record of attendance

APPENDIX 2

EXAMPLE LETTER B – Attendance Concern (unauthorised)

Date

Name and address of parent

Dear Parent

Re: **Name:** xxx **Dob:** xxx **School:** xxx

I am writing to advise you that «forename»'s school attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to «percentage_attendance»% and as a result we are becoming concerned that «forename» is missing a significant part of learning. I have enclosed a copy of «forename»'s attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning, and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement.

I will continue to monitor «forename»'s attendance and I look forward to seeing an improvement. If the absence is due to a medical reason please ensure that we have been informed so appropriate support can be put in place.

I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being considered.

I am aware that there can be many causes and difficulties in family life which can affect school attendance. If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on «forename» attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact me. One option may be to offer support through an Early Help Assessment (EHA). An EHA is used to identify a child and family's needs and strengths, and to plan the right support and services to address those needs at an early stage. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

However, it does no harm in speaking with the teacher or attendance team, because together we can make a difference.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Enc Record of attendance

APPENDIX 3

EXAMPLE LETTER C – Authorised Absence

Date

Name and Address of parent

Dear Parent,

Re: Child Name: xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

This letter is for your information so you do not need to take any action.

I would like to thank you for following the school procedure regarding Attendance.

We understand that xxx has had authorised absence recently and that you called the school every day to keep us informed. We would just like to let you know how this has affected xxx attendance which is currently at «percentage_attendance»%.

School share a vital part in ensuring that children who are absent from school because of their medical needs maintain their education. If you child is absent from school for over 10 days it may be necessary for school to seek support for your child. Please ensure that school is fully aware of any medical issues that may affect your child's attendance.

Please continue to work with us. You are more than welcome to contact *school* to discuss any queries or concerns you may have.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning, and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement. Good attendance enables students to keep up with the work required.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 4

EXAMPLE LETTER D – Persistent Absence

Date

Name and address of parent

Dear Parent

Re: Child Name: xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

I have noted during a recent attendance review that your child is beginning to show a pattern of persistent lateness.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

If you are experiencing any difficulties regarding your child's education, I would welcome the opportunity of meeting with you to discuss this.

Please note that if your child arrives after registers close this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being considered.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 5

EXAMPLE LETTER E – Term Time Leave (unauthorised)

Date

Name and Address of parent

Dear Parent

Re: Child Name: xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

Thank you for completing the term time leave request form as per procedure.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 was amended in September 2013. The amendments made clear that Head teachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless ‘exceptional circumstances’ exist.

We have considered your application carefully and the reasons for the absence you have highlighted, however on this occasion we do not believe that the explanation provided can be justified as “exceptional circumstances”.

We are aware that families have had limited opportunities to take leave of absence, however we are all mindful of the impact of COVID on children’s learning, and we must all do our utmost to minimise the disruption, to allow for their future academic outcomes and life chances.

Should you still decide to continue to take your child out of school during term time, then please note that the absence will be recorded as ‘G’ denoting an unauthorised term time leave.

If unauthorised absences are recorded, a Penalty Notice Fine can be issued by the Local Authority to each parent/carer in respect of each child who is absent from school. **The amount of the penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 22 to 28 days.** Failure to pay will result in legal proceedings being initiated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher

APPENDIX 6

EXAMPLE LETTER F – Invite to Parent Contract Meeting letter

Date

Name and address of parent

Re: Child Name: xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

Dear Parent,

I am writing to inform you that «forename»'s attendance is still causing concern. Therefore, we need to meet with you urgently to discuss the situation.

You are required to attend a meeting with a member of the Attendance Team to discuss this matter further at the date and time below.

Date: xxx Time: xxx

Should «forename»'s attendance remain irregular; we may have to refer this matter to the Local Authority who could consider more formal action. This might result in a Penalty Notice Fine and/or prosecution through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**, and a fine of up to **£2500 and/or 3 months in prison**.

Absence due to self-limiting illness can be authorised in the first instance but a child who is absent frequently due to a medical reason, including repeated self-limiting illnesses, medical information will be required.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss any concerns you may have so we can continue to support your child in making good progress and I hope that you will work with us to improve «forename»'s attendance and therefore avoid the need for legal proceedings to be initiated. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Encs Record of Attendance
School Attendance Leaflet