



Forest View Primary School

Attendance Policy - September 2024

Introduction

At Forest View Primary School, we recognise that regular and punctual attendance at school is vital if children are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to achieve their full potential.

Forest View Primary School expects the highest standards in attendance and punctuality from all children, at all times. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment whereby each member of the school community feels valued. We will support children and their families to ensure that excellent attendance and punctuality are achieved.

Our policy applies to all children registered at Forest View Primary school and sets out the responsibilities of the school and the parents/carers.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to advice from the Local Authority.

Aims

- To improve children's achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, with the exception of those with chronic health issues
- Create an ethos in which excellent attendance and punctuality are seen as the norm and valued by all members of the school community
- Raise awareness to parents, carers and children of the importance of attending school every day and on time throughout every key stage of education
- Work in partnership with parents, carers, staff, governors, the Local Authority Attendance Service and other service providers to ensure that all children realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence
- Establish consistent, rigorous attendance monitoring procedures to ensure the early identification of attendance/punctuality issues and implement appropriate support to address the causes of these
- To work with appropriate external agencies (where necessary) in order to address barriers to attendance and/or punctuality and overcome them

School Procedures

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our children, the School Attendance Officer will monitor pupil's attendance on a regular basis. The Head Teacher is responsible for the overall implementation and management of this policy and reports information on attendance figures to the governing body on a termly basis.

At Forest View Primary School, our attendance procedures are as follows:

- Attendance is monitored every 2 weeks to identify concerns with the attendance of individuals
- Parents/Carers of children whose attendance falls below 96% are alerted by a 1st concern letter (Stage 1). Children at Stage 1 will be monitored over a 2-week period and progress to Stage 2 if concerns remain about attendance
- Parents/Carers of children whose attendance fails to improve after the 1st concern letter are contacted by the schools Attendance Officer for a telephone meeting (Stage 2)
- Should an individual attendance fail to improve during a further 2-week period, Parents/Carers will be invited to attend a meeting with the School Attendance Officer (Stage 3) to identify available support and seek to find ways in which attendance can be improved. Proof of illness may be sought at this stage.
- A 2nd concern letter will be issued for those children with less than 92% attendance. No absences will be authorised unless proof of illness is provided (with the exception of those with medical conditions that have been discussed with the school)
- A child below 90% attendance is classed as a 'Persistent Absentee and may need an individual attendance plan and referral to Local Authority Attendance Team (Stage 4). Referrals to the Local Authority or alternative service providers (including the School Nurse) may be made where this is deemed necessary (Stage 4).

Additional procedures: -

- Improvement texts will be sent to Parents/Carers of children whose attendance has been identified as a concern, should their attendance improve
- Class attendance and whole school attendance is monitored weekly, termly and yearly
- Parents/Carers will be informed of their children's attendance each half term
- Leave of absence/holidays during term time will not be authorised unless in exceptional circumstances; this is in accordance with (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Home visits may be made by school staff or the local authority
- Information & updates regarding attendance will be shared on our school website and Facebook page

If your child's attendance does not improve following school attendance procedures or, if parents/carers will not engage in discussions regarding attendance (either by telephone or attending meetings), a referral may be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team, which may result in the issuing of a penalty notice warning and/or prosecution.

First Day Response

- All Parents/Carers must contact school if their child is unable to attend for any reason
- It is expected that Parents/Carers will telephone school before 9.30am, send a text via Parent Mail or email the Attendance Officer to explain the reason for their absence. Parents/Carers are required to contact school on every day of absence, unless there is a long-term reason, and this has been discussed with school
- If school has not received notification from Parents/Carers by 9.30am, the Attendance Officer will contact them via phone and text message in an attempt to ascertain a reason for absence
- If no verbal reason for the absence is received, it will be recorded as 'unauthorised' and coded "O" in the register. If 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days, not consecutive sessions) are recorded within a 10-week period a penalty notice warning may be issued
- If the Attendance Officer is unable to make contact with Parents/Carers for 2 days and/or a child has attendance and welfare concerns a home visit may be made by 2 members of staff. Children services and/or the police may be contacted in accordance with our safeguarding procedures if we are unable to see the child during this visit

It is important to note that the Head Teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised; notification from parents does not automatically authorise an absence.

Penalty Notice Warning

If 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days, not consecutive sessions) are recorded within a 10-week period a penalty notice warning may be issued.

You will receive a notice of improvement written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued, which will tell you the extent of your child's absences and give you 15 - 30 days, 3-6 weeks flexible, to be reviewed on an individual basis at 3 week mark, in which to effect an improvement. In that time your child must have no unauthorised absences/ have shown improvement from school.

You will not receive a notice of improvement written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued for leave of absence in term time, which has not been authorised by the Head Teacher or where no request for authorisation has been sought.

There is no limit to the number of times a notice of improvement written warning of possible Penalty Notice issue may be made in any particular case.

Leave of Absence / Unauthorised Holidays

- Leave of Absence during term time will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. Should Parents/Carers wish to apply for a Leave of Absence, they must complete a 'Leave of Absence form' which can be obtained from the school office.
- Any 'Leave of Absence' must be requested as far in advance as possible, and usually no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. If 'Leave of Absence' is granted during term time, it is entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion and it is not a parental right.
- The 'Leave of Absence' granted will depend upon the nature of the event, frequency, amount of advanced notice given and a child's overall attendance pattern.
- If unauthorised holidays are taken, parents may be referred to the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

What is a Penalty Notice?

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly, and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court whilst still securing an improvement in a pupil's attendance. Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

Two Penalty Notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be the most appropriate tool. Therefore, from autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate. The three-year period will begin on the date of issue of the first penalty notice.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions. Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued.

Legal Responsibilities

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. This is in accordance with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Should a child fail to attend school regularly, the school must refer individual cases to the Local Authority (LA) and legal action may be taken. The LA will make enquiries prior to making the decision regarding prosecution of the parent under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, for failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school or an alternative provision. There are two separate offences:

- a. Section 444(1) where a parent fails to secure his/her child's regular attendance; and
- b. Section 444(1A) where the parent knowingly fails to cause his/her child to attend school regularly. This latter offence is an aggravated offence and if found guilty can lead to a maximum fine of £2,500 or up to three months in prison.

Education Law defines a parent as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child on a daily basis.

It is important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same household as the child, if the parent has parental rights they are still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

Illness / Medical Appointments

Whilst we understand that illness is often unavoidable, Parents/Carers should aim to bring their child into school and only keep children at home if they have a serious illness or injury. We appreciate that it can sometimes be difficult to decide if your child should be sent to school when they are suffering from certain illnesses, particularly as you may be concerned about passing the illness onto others. In these circumstances, Parents/Carers should seek recent advice from Public Health England regarding infection control in schools (which can be found on the attendance section of our school website) or by contacting the school office, where staff can advise.

If a child has a minor illness (e.g. a headache, cold or a sore throat etc.), we ask that Parents/Carers bring them into school and inform staff that their child is feeling unwell. Parents/Carers will always be contacted if a child's condition worsens or if they become poorly during the school day; it is therefore vital that Parents/Carers ensure that school has up to date contact details and emergency phone numbers.

Wherever possible, routine medical/dental/opticians appointments should be made outside of school hours. Where this is unavoidable, Parents/Carers should bring any appointment letters into school so that a copy can be kept on file informing the schools attendance

officer. To ensure that children miss as little time as possible, they should attend school prior to any appointments and be brought back to school afterwards, if at all possible. This will also ensure your child receives their registration mark.

Punctuality

Lateness is incredibly important at Forest View Primary School. We recognise that lateness results in loss of learning and may draw unnecessary attention, impacting upon progress and your child's emotional wellbeing.

Doors open at 8.45am and morning sessions begin at 8.55am; it is expected that children will arrive in school before the doors are closed at this time. Any children arriving after 8.55am will be required to enter school via the main entrance. Children arriving via the main entrance will be marked as 'late' and coded "L" in the register. Morning registers will close at 9.15am and afternoon registers will close at 1.15pm. Arrival after the close of registration with no valid reason will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded "U" in the register. **If your child arrives late for school, they MUST be accompanied into school by an adult for safeguarding reasons, and a reason for lateness should be provided.**

Parents/Carers of children, who have patterns of lateness, even by a few minutes, will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, Parents/Carers will be contacted by the school's Attendance Officer to discuss the problem. If the lateness continues, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

Attendance Rewards

At Forest View Primary School, we offer the following attendance rewards:

- Celebration assemblies are held every Friday, where weekly class attendance winners are announced and attendance cup displayed in their class
- A weekly class prize of an additional play time (15 minutes) is awarded to classes with at least 96% attendance
- The class with the most weeks at 96% attendance + over the course of a term, receive a special treat (chosen by the individual class at the start of each term)
- Weekly class attendance initiatives and prizes for the children
- Certificate each term for those children with above 96% attendance
- Certificate and a prize for each child with 100% attendance each full term
- Certificate and a special prize for each child with 100% attendance for the whole year are presented in a whole school celebration assembly at the end of each academic year (these are in addition to their termly certificates and prizes)
- Weekly attendance updates via the school's Facebook page and school website to celebrate the school/classes/individual achievements

Please note with regards to those children with chronic/medical health conditions, medical appointments related to these specific conditions will not affect their ability to achieve an individual attendance award.

Forest View Primary School – Stages of Response for Attendance Our ‘Attendance Pathway’

Stage 1 - Attendance falls below 96%

- 1st concern letter issued to Parents/Carers
- Attendance is monitored for a 2-week period
- If the child has 100% attendance for the subsequent 2-week period, an improvement text is sent to Parents/Carers
- If no improvement, progress to Stage 2

Stage 2 – Progression from Stage 1

- Parents/Carers will be contacted by the school’s attendance officer for a telephone meeting
- Attendance is monitored for a further 2 weeks
- If the child has 100% attendance for the subsequent 2-week period, an improvement text is sent to Parents/Carers
- If no improvement, progress to Stage 3

Stage 3 – Progression from Stage 2 OR Attendance falls below 92%

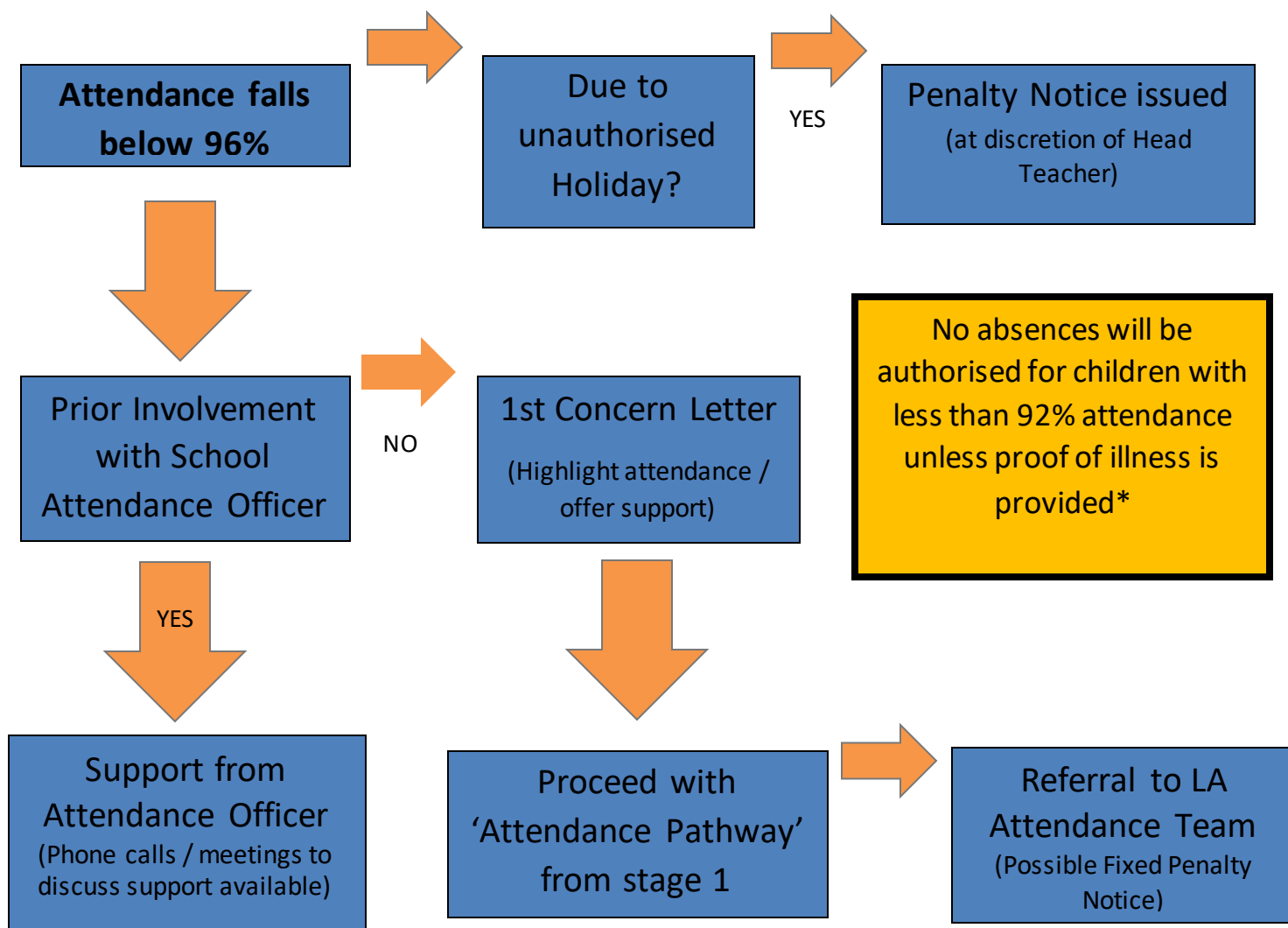
- An invitation to attend a meeting in school with the school’s attendance officer may be issued
- A 2nd concern letter issued to Parents/Carers requesting proof of illness
- Attendance is monitored for a further 2 weeks
- If the child has 100% attendance for the subsequent 2-week period, an improvement text is sent to Parents/Carers
- If no improvement, progress to Stage 4

Stage 4 – Progression from Stage 3 OR Attendance falls below 90%

- Children below 90% attendance are classed as a ‘Persistent Absentee’ and may need an individual attendance plan
- Referral may be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team or alternative service providers
- A penalty notice warning may be issued
- Fixed Penalty Notice / Prosecution may result

If your child's attendance does not improve following school attendance procedures or, if parents/carers will not engage in discussions regarding attendance (either by telephone or in person), a referral may be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team, which may result in the issuing of a penalty notice warning, fixed penalty notice and/or prosecution.

Forest View Primary School - Attendance Flow Chart



Attendance is monitored every 2 weeks, depending upon stage in the 'Attendance Pathway' (if improvements are not seen within set time scale, individuals progress to the next stage)

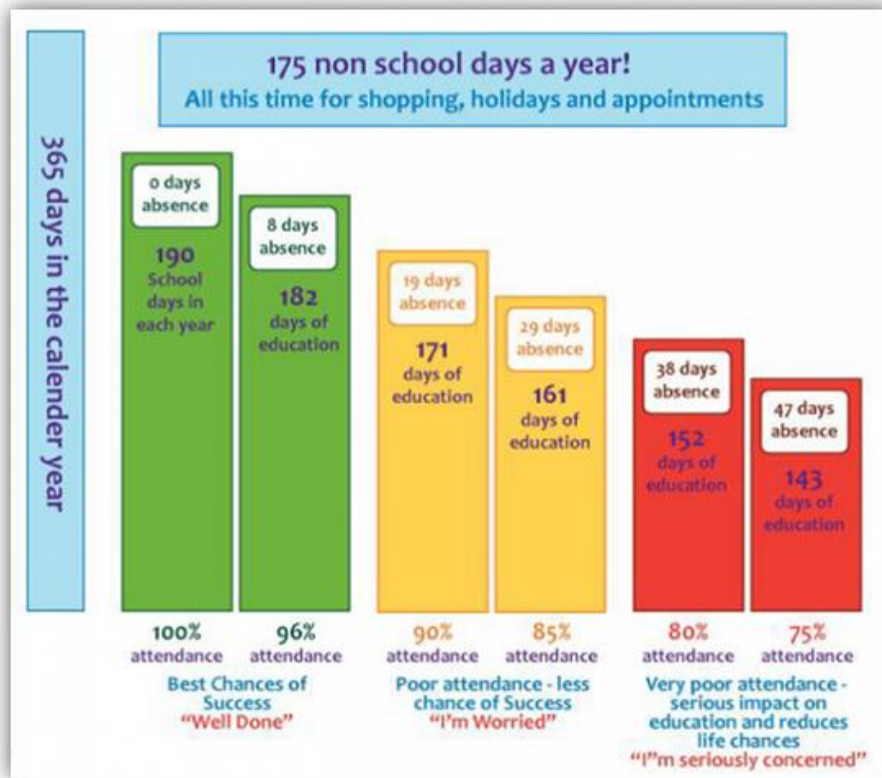
*Unless in exceptional cases where serious medical conditions are known.

Categorising Attendance and Learning Hours Lost

“A pupil is classed as a ‘Persistent Absentee’ if they have below 90% Attendance or more than **19** days off school.”

Descriptor	Threshold Attendance	Actual Attendance	Whole Days Absent	No. of Sessions	Learning Hours Lost
Excellent	100%	190 days	0	0	0
	99%	188 days	2	4	10
Good	98%	186 days	4	8	20
	97%	184 days	6	12	30
	96%	182 days	8	16	40
Cause for concern	95%	180 days	10	20	50
	94%	179 days	11	22	55
	93%	177 days	13	26	65
	92%	175 days	15	30	75
	91%	173 days	17	34	85
Unsatisfactory	90%	171 days	19	38	95
	89%	169 days	21	42	105
	88%	167 days	23	46	115
	87%	165 days	25	50	125
Serious Concern	86%	163 days	27	54	135
	85%	162 days	29	58	145
	84%	160 days	31	62	155
	83%	158 days	32	64	160
	82%	156 days	34	68	170
	81%	154 days	36	72	180
	80%	152 days	38	76	190

Attendance Percentage Chart



Punctuality Chart



Approved by Governors November 2023

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

Every school ✓ day matters!

enjoy • learn • achieve

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

The new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.
For example: 2 siblings with unauthorised absence during term time may result in each parent being issued with one penalty notice per child.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child, paid within 28 days.
Reduced to £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years from the date of issue of first penalty notice)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence (within 3 years from the date of issue of first penalty notice)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.
This is a criminal offence and a parent may end up with a criminal record.

Approved by Governors November 2023