



# **Foxbridge Primary School**

## **Attendance Policy and Strategy**

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**Chairs of Governors: Alex Mcquillan**

**Signed copy held centrally**

## **Contents:**

- 1. Statement of Intent**
- 2. Legal Framework**
- 3. Roles and Responsibilities**
- 4. Recording Attendance**
- 5. Monitoring Attendance**
- 6. Strategies for Improving and Promoting Attendance**
- 7. Appendices**

## **1. Statement of Intent:**

At Foxbridge Primary School, our school community strives to provide a safe, warm and caring environment where pupils and teachers can work together to achieve high standards in every area of school life.

Our school ethos underpins these principles and supports staff, pupils and families in maintaining a good level of attendance through a variety of ways that are outlined in this policy.

We recognise that good attendance is essential for high standards and pupil attainment and therefore expect our pupils to attend school regularly and on time in order to maximise their learning and reach their true potential. Evidence shows that children who attend school regularly are more likely to:

- make better progress academically and socially
- find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- maintain closer friendships with other children

‘Pupils who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, to under achieve and/or become involved in anti-social behaviour’ (Department for Education).

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent or carer.

### **Our aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including reducing persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Achieve attendance levels of **96% and above** across the school
- Intervening early and working with parents/carers, pupils and other agencies to ensure we are identifying the barriers and supporting pupils at the earliest point
- Regular monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that may require more support

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### **At Foxbridge Primary School all parties should work together to:**

#### **Expect**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents in order to build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

#### **Monitor**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

### **Listen and Understand**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all parties can work together to resolve them.

### **Facilitate Support**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

### **Formalise Support**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

### **Enforce**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a Penalty Notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupils right to an education.

**'Attendance is everyone's business'**

## **2. Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance both from the DfE and the local authority.

Duty of parents and carers:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 lays a duty on parents to ensure that their child receives an efficient, full-time education, which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs that they may have. Parents may be prosecuted if they fail to ensure their child receives an education.

The following sections apply:

- Section 444(1) - This states that it is an offence if "a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil fails to attend regularly" at the school. The disposal in respect of this offence is level 3 (a fine of up to £1000 per parent).
- Section 444(1A) - This is an 'aggravated offence'. The Act states that it is an offence if "a child of compulsory school age did fail to attend regularly and that "the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause him to do so" without reasonable justification. The disposal in respect of this offence stands at level 4 (a fine of up to £2500 per parent and/or up to 3 months imprisonment).
- Parents and pupils are supported at school and LA level to overcome barriers to regular attendance through a wide continuum of assessment and intervention strategies.
- Sanctions are never used as a punishment, only as a means of enforcing attendance where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure an improvement.
- Schools will be required to provide LAs with the name and address of pupils who are I coded for illness and who they believe will miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days. At

present have to report to Inclusion/PME for absences without permission of school for 10 continuous days or 15 cumulative days.

- National Framework for issuing of Penalty Notices for school absence – sets national threshold for 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (5 school days) in a 10-week rolling period. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (for example, 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time, plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (for example, 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in week 1 and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (for example, 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).
- **All schools** will need to consider whether it's appropriate to ask for a Penalty Notice (PN) to be issued by the LA or whether other intervention or support is likely to improve attendance where there have been 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. NB This will not apply in the case of absence for holiday taken in term-time as support not required.
- As of the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024, Penalty notice fines are increasing from £60 to £80, or £160 if not paid with 21 days for any 5-day unauthorised absence period
- National limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3<sup>rd</sup> offence parent likely to be prosecuted.

Please see Appendix 1 – working together to improve school attendance

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

#### School Community Council

The board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

#### The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school monitoring school-level absence data
- Reporting absence figures and termly updates to Governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring any fixed penalty notices
- Providing CPD where needed about attendance and policies to staff
- Issuing reminders to parents and staff about the policy and the new government guidelines and update parents and staff of any changes to the guidance in newsletters, assemblies, staff meetings
- Referring to the Local Authority if stage 4 is reached
- Reporting term-time holidays of more than 5 days to the Local Authority
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with parents and other agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Informs senior leaders they are unable to contact a parent about a pupil

## **Teachers and support staff**

Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.
- All staff must pass any verbal explanations for absence given by a parent or carer to the school office.
- All staff must report any concerns or patterns regarding pupil absence or punctuality to the headteacher or Parent Officer.

## **School office staff**

School office staff are responsible for:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on the school system
- Follow up with phone calls, text messages and emails if there is a child with whom there has been no contact from parent and they are not in school.
- Inform a senior leader where no contact can be made
- Ensure that any unexplained absences are reported to the Parent Officer and headteacher
- Ensure that children arriving after 8:45am but before register closes at 9:15 am are registered using the correct code

## **Pupils**

Pupils are responsible for:

- Understanding the importance of coming into school every day and to have high expectations of themselves
- Knowing our attendance aim of 96% and aspiring to be 96% or above

## **Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring children come into school everyday that the school is open
- Notifying the school of their child's absence each day that they are absent so that the school know why their child is off school
- To know that if we are not notified that their child is absent between 3-5 days with no contact from parents/carers and it is unexplained, we will be completing a home visit. If no one is at the home address then a form will be posted through the door for parents/carers to contact the school within 24 hours.
- If we notice that children are off for a period of time and we have reason to believe they may have gone on holiday we will ask for evidence of reported illness/absence

## **4. Recording Attendance**

### **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 and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.15 am. The register for the second session will be taken at the beginning of the afternoon session and will be kept open for 5 minutes.

### **Unplanned absence**

- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible. They can phone the school office, e-mail the school or leave a message on the school's absence line.
- The school will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.
- 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.

### **Planned absence**

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides evidence of the appointment.
- We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

- The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. There is a form designed for parents for this purpose.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term-time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

There are very few occasions when an absence would be considered exceptional.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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

## Holidays

- Term-time holidays are not permitted during school term time. If a parent or carer applies for a leave of absence that requires a pupil to be taken out of term time for a holiday, this absence will not be authorised. If a pupil is absent for 5 days or more then a referral will be made to the Local Authority and the school will refer the absence to the local authority to issue a penalty.
- If we suspect a pupil has gone on holiday without informing us, the school may conduct a home visit to ensure the child's safety. It is our responsibility to safeguard children and to investigate all absences from school.
- If, when the school considers a home visit necessary, and there is no response a letter will be left instructing parents to contact the school within 24 hours. Failure to do so will result in the school informing the Local Authority about the absences.
- For more information about the new changes that are coming into force in August 2024 please see appendix 5 - Penalty Notice for Unauthorised Absences: What you need to know about the changes and Appendix 4 – Leicestershire County Council Code of Conduct. These documents clearly outline the procedures schools and Local Authorities take when pupils are taken out of school during term time for holidays

## 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 (9.15 am) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Must enter school through the main entrance if they arrive after 8:45am, so that they can be accounted for. If the pupil arrives unaccompanied by an adult, parents/carers will be informed.

## 5. Monitoring Attendance

Lateness and punctuality are monitored by the senior leaders and class teachers.

The headteacher at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

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 School Community Council.

### **Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by telephone as soon as possible and before 9:30am. This will be followed up with emails, texts messages and home visits, if appropriate if we receive no response.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

### **Reporting to parents**

Parents/carers will be informed about their child's attendance through the following:

- Annual reports
- Through a letter/text message if attendance falls below 95%
- Through a letter and personal call if attendance falls below 90%

### **Reducing persistent absence**

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis. Contact is made with the families where a pattern and/or trends of absenteeism is seen or where absence falls below expected level.

Whilst the law states that it is the responsibility of the parent or carer to ensure their child attends school regularly, Leicestershire County Council recommends a collaborative approach between parents, schools, and other agencies to ensure that the appropriate support to resolve barriers to attendance is put in place.

Where a child is considered to be persistently absent, the Parent Officer and/or senior leaders will contact the family and support them to address the barrier to the child attending school. This could be through regular contact, referral to outside agency support or talking to the child directly.

As a school we will use a range of strategies to help support pupils at risk of Persistent Absence to attend school. If we notice pupils are missing school for any reason we will endeavour to support families in the following ways:

- Meeting with pupils and their families to address barriers as to why they are missing school
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support
- Leading weekly check-ins with families to review progress and the impact of the support we have put in place
- Considering what support they may need, whether this is early help and, in some circumstances, it may be contacting the Local Authority to support as well

- Parent/Carer and Child Contracts – we understand that sometimes attendance is often a wider issue a family is facing. We will work together with families to support through a Parent/Carer and Child Contract (please see appendix 7, this is a template of the Contract we will be filling out with parents/carers and pupils)

The school will work in conjunction with different agencies and professionals to support families, this may be to work with other schools that family members attend or have regular meetings with parents/carers and pupils. Any concerns will be escalated to Children's Services in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Legal intervention:**

As a school, we will allow sufficient time to improve pupils' attendance. However, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect we will need to consider:

- Making referrals to the Local Authority attendance team
- Make a referral for penalty charges
- Social Services
- Early Help

If we do make a referral for penalty charges it will be done so in line with the LA's Code of Conduct (see Appendix 3, Leicestershire County Council Code of Conduct).

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

At Foxbridge Primary School, we promote attendance through a variety of ways:

- Honest and open communication about expected attendance levels
- Promoting good attendance and elements of our attendance strategy on newsletters
- Respectful relationships with families
- Close monitoring of attendance
- Liaising with external agencies, as required

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years by the headteacher. At every review, the Policy will be approved by the School Community Council.

### **Links with other policies**

This Policy links to the following policies: Child Protection Policy and Behaviour Policy.

## 7. Appendices

**Appendix 1** – Leicestershire County Council ‘Working together to improve school attendance’.

Link:

<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/resource/files/2023-02/LCC-Attendance-Team-Guidance.pdf>

### **Appendix 2 - Attendance Codes – September 2024**

<b>Attending the school</b>	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
<b>Absent – Leave of absence</b>	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes</b>	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
<b>Administrative Codes</b>	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

### Appendix 3 – Leicestershire County Council Code of Conduct

Link:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-11/attendance-team-code-of-conduct.pdf>

## Appendix 4– Penalty Notice for unauthorised absences: What you need to know about the changes

# Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences: What you need to know about the changes.

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for unauthorised absences that occur after 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

### 5 Consecutive Days of Term Time Leave.

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days, and for fewer days where this has happened before.

### 10 Sessions of Unauthorised Absence in a 10-week period.

Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of absence in a 10-week period.

### Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent, for each child who was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave will result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

#### 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 when paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

#### Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

(No option to pay at £80 level)

#### Third offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will proceed to the Magistrates' court.

Magistrate's fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child.



Please consult your school's attendance policy and speak with your school if you are thinking of taking your child out of school during term-time. It is likely you will need to make a written request to take your child out of school and any leave of absence will need to be agreed by your Headteacher before it is taken.

## Appendix 5 – Parent/Carer and Child Contract proforma

### Foxbridge Primary School Parent/Carer Contract

<b>Child's Name:</b>	
<b>DOB:</b>	
<b>Contact &amp; home Details:</b>	
<b>Parent's/Carer's Name:</b>	
<b>Senior staff with overall responsibility:</b>	
<b>Teacher:</b>	
<b>School contact details:</b>	
<b>LA contact details:</b>	
We are going to work together in making sure that the above-named child improves their attendance at school over the next 3 months	
<b>Current Attendance &amp; comments:</b> <small>(What we have tried, who we have worked with, reasons as to why they have been absent etc...)</small>	
<b>The specific targets of our plan. What we aim to do by (date):</b>	
<b>Targets achieved:</b>	
<b>I/We (the parents/carers) agree to:</b> <small>(please detail)</small>	
<b>We (the school) agree to:</b> <small>(please detail)</small>	

Agreeing to the Contract:

Consent by parent(s)/carer(s)

I/we have agreed to this Parenting Contract and will

(a) work with the school (and Council) as detailed above, to improve my/our child's school attendance, and

(b) carry out what we have promised to do.

I/we also agree to information being shared with other professionals and agencies as required to help us. I/we understand that if my child has any unauthorised absences from school in the next (three months), a Penalty Notice or prosecution may follow without further warning. This agreement may be given as part of the evidence.

Signed (Parent/s or Carer/s):

.....

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Signed (on behalf of the school)

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Date:

Copies to be circulated to all parties