



# Attendance Policy

This Policy was reviewed by the Deputy Head  
Teacher

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## 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

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

Folville Junior School expects every child, who is on roll, to attend every day, when school is in session, as long as there are fit healthy enough to do so. It is one of our priorities to encourage the children to attend, and appropriate procedures are in place. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. We strive to make school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children. Who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. School procedures

### 3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45 am each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50 am and will be kept open until 9:00 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:10 pm (Year 3 & 4) and 13:20pm (Year 5 & 6) and will be kept open until 13:30pm.

### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

- Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 08:50 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).
- Absence due to illness will be 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 parents to provide 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.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Parents must notify the school in advance of a medical or dental appointment, by reporting this to the school office and where possible providing evidence in the form of an appointment letter or card.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### **3.4 Lateness and Punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

As part of the normal monitoring of attendance parents are contacted when children are persistently late. School and parents will work together to improve the situation.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason; ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary; identify whether the absence is approved or not, and identify the correct attendance code to use.

After register is closed at 09:15am, the school office will send a text message prompting parents to contact the school office and report the child's absence. Parents are expected to contact the school office daily to a report of the child's absence and to keep the school informed of the reason for absence. Until parents have

contacted the school office and informed us of the reason for absence, this will remain unauthorised on the child's attendance record.

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

Parents will be informed about their child's absence record at parents' evening and where the child's attendance has dropped below 95%, (a letter and the attendance report will be sent out to parents informing them of the actual attendance percentage. All children who are below 95% will be monitored and if necessary, a meeting will be arranged with parents, school and the education welfare officer.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be exceptional circumstances.

We define exceptional circumstances to be events or problems which are sudden and unexpected. For example, bereavement, unexpected personal or family problems or illness.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' 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. This only applies to travellers who do not have a permanent address.

### **4.2 Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:**

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if head teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative, if the head teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a head teacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the head teacher

may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

#### **4.3 Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above**

The head teacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

Evidence would be required in each case.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the head teacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- 1) The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils).
- 2) Year six transition day (for pupils in year six).
- 3) Year six SATs week (for pupils in year six).

#### **4.4 Consideration for exceptional term time requests.**

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested

- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- Whether parent/carer have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.
- Whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams;

#### **4.5 Circumstances NOT considered as exceptional**

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.

#### **4.6 Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the head teacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

## **5. Strategies for promoting attendance**

- Rewards for good attendance – All children who have 100% attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate, usually awarded during the last assembly of the term. There are special certificates for any child who has 100% attendance for a whole year and special prizes. Monthly certificates are given out to classes with the highest attendance.
- Attendance targets – The school sets attendance targets for each year. These are agreed by the senior staff member for attendance and the education welfare officer at the annual target setting meeting. At this meeting the attendance from the previous year is reviewed. The attendance targets are then agreed with the governors. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in the previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets. The school's target is 96%.

## **6. Attendance monitoring**

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to call the school each day to keep the school informed of the reason for absence and the child's wellbeing.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reason for this. If, after contacting parents, a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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.

Pupil absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy. It is the responsibility of the senior leadership team and governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the head teacher.

The governing board has the responsibility for this policy and seeing that this is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the attendance figures are as high as they should be.

### **7.2 The head teacher**

The head teacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school absence data and reporting it to governors.

The head teacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 The deputy head teacher**

The deputy head teacher:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level

- Reports concerns about attendance to the head teacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the head teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

#### **7.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

They will also be responsible for following up absences in an appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer –term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the head teacher, who will contact the parents or guardians, any concerns should be reported on CPoms.

#### **7.5 Office staff**

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the deputy head teacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body

### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy



## Appendix 1: 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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day