

“A unique family working together to be the best”

Forest Lodge Community Primary School



Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. As a school we will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to support regular school attendance. This school attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department of Education.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence (including lateness) affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you information on attendance in our regular *bulletin/newsletter*;
- Provide you with reports (twice a year) on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality is, and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.

- Run promotional events when parents/carers, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.
- Reward 100% attendance half termly, termly and annually with certificates, events and trips.

Understanding types of absence:

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (ie condoned absence)
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be addressed by the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all pupil absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All our PA pupils and their parents/carers are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: *allocation of additional support through a Mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance*. All PA cases

are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you either then or at a later point.

NB Notes/letters that you send us will be stored on your child's file.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence (*and on subsequent days*) if we have not heard from you;
- Write to you to if we are concerned about your child's attendance to alert you to a concerning emerging pattern or level of absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our *Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, Assistant Head teacher* if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance is a concern.
- In some circumstances, if your child is absent from school and has not been seen, we will arrange for a visit to your home to be undertaken to establish that your child is safe. This could be by a Police Officer.

NB: Letters and notes of our contact with you will be stored on your child's file.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. *There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.*

The Education Welfare Officer:

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer

from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers may use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. (Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued by the Local Authority immediately following a period of holiday-related leave that has not been authorised by the school.)

Parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority on 0116 2211260. They can also be reached by e-mailing education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8:40 am** and we expect your child to be in class/on the playground at that time.

Registers are marked by **9:00 am** and your CHILD will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your CHILD arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the EWO and Miss Smith to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays In Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help their child by not taking them away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is **no automatic entitlement** in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school a

maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS) or any other public examinations.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below 96% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to parents.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The Attendance target for the school for 2015/16 is 95%.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our *bulletin/newsletter* and we ask for your full support.

The registration system

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another	Authorised absence

	appropriate code/description)	
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	school closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Security of registers

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made. These also need preserving for at least three year. The registers must be safely stored.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Miss Smith, Attendance Officer
Mrs Meer, Assistant Head teacher
Mrs Malik, Deputy Head teacher

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.