

Forty Hill CE School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



The law requires that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education.

Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their child attends school regularly. The Department for Education considers that unnecessary absence from school is unacceptable and must be prevented and tackled by schools: promoting regular school attendance is a key component in the Government's strategy to raise educational standards.

The governors and staff of Forty Hill CE Primary School believe that if children attend school regularly and punctually, they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and establish a commitment to work which will be carried forward throughout their education career and into adulthood.

Parents' and Carers' Responsibility

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority. Education Act 1996

- Regular and punctual attendance helps to ensure our children are happy in school and achieving their full potential. Routine habits of work, formed when young, lay good foundations for future education and for the adult world of responsibilities and employment.
- Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and frequent absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Bringing their children to school every day and on time
- The collection of their children at the end of the school day
- Impressing upon their children the importance of attending school regularly and the need to observe the school's code of conduct regarding behaviour, code of dress, homework etc
- Working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to poor attendance
- Ensuring they are aware of the attendance policy of the school
- Notifying the school regarding absence on the first day of absence. The explanation of this absence should be confirmed in writing when the child returns to school
- Where possible, arranging dental and medical appointments outside school hours
- Ensuring that holidays are not taken during term time
- Make applications for exceptional leave in writing, giving the reason for the request

Staff Responsibilities

Forty Hill CE School is responsible for supporting the attendance of its pupils and for dealing with problems which may lead to poor attendance.

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers
- Informing the Headteacher or Attendance Officer where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation (but not necessarily taking this further – responsibility of office staff)

- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings
- Setting an exemplary example by being punctual and having good attendance themselves

The Attendance Officer(s) is responsible for:

- Supporting parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils
- Following up specific requests from the headteacher for information about individuals
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence
- Being sensitive to the needs of the individual pupil and parent
- Responding promptly to issues which may lead to non-attendance
- Monitoring individual attendance on a daily basis where concerns have been raised
- Including information about attendance trends and class percentages in the newsletter
- Promptly checking online registers have been completed and submitted by the class teacher on a twice daily (am & pm) basis to ensure that the 'fire list' is printed for use in emergencies
- Ensuring prompt follow-up on unexplained absences (first day calling)
- Ensuring registers are accurate
- Collating attendance percentages
- Monitoring trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Acting as a point of contact for teaching and non-teaching staff where concerns need to be raised or advice sought
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence
- Generating warning letters to parents
- Making referrals to Education Welfare Service (EWS)
- Ensuring that the attendance policy is followed and that the actions from EWS meetings are carried out
- Liaising and discussing with parents issues relating to attendance
- Termly meetings with the EWS
- Notifying (in consultation with the Headteacher) the EWS of the need for a Fixed Penalty Notice and providing support with prosecution
- Feedback and discussions with the class teacher over individual cases
- Ensuring procedures for class and individual rewards for good attendance are followed
- Regularly reporting to the Headteacher and Deputy Head on attendance issues

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall preparation and implementation of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Promotion of attendance at all times
- Informing the Governing Body of attendance data and how the school is addressing issues
- Including information about attendance trends and class percentages in the newsletter

Attendance Registers

- Under The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, we are required to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent
- Attendance registers are legal documents which may be required as evidence in court cases
- Registers must record whether each pupil is present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity. In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school
- When calling the register, the appropriate mark and/symbol should be selected against each pupil's name. In completing online registers, staff need to select the appropriate button; present/absent/late
- A pupil's name may not be deleted from the attendance register unless it has also been deleted from the admissions register

Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register:

- In the case of a pupil who has been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than four weeks and both the school and the EWS have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil
- Notification has been given that the child is receiving education otherwise than at school
- If the child has been registered at another school
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Punctuality

Parents and carers must ensure that their children arrive at school on time and are collected promptly at the end of the school day. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and into the wider world.

- Morning Nursery sessions start at 8.45am and finish at 11.45am.
- For the rest of the school, we employ a 'rolling start', where children may enter the classroom between 8.45am and 8.55am to make a prompt start to their learning
- School finishes at 3.15pm
- Registers must be completed by 9.00am; children arriving after this time are marked as late
- Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken but before 9.30am. Time of arrival is recorded in the register
- Parents will be required to sign children in at the office including a reason for lateness, at drop off and at collection.
- Parents and carers with problems getting their children to school on time can contact the Attendance Officer
- Registers close at 9.30am. Lateness after this time is recorded as an unauthorised absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety

Absences

Schools have a responsibility to ensure that pupils attend regularly and punctually.

We monitor attendance closely and the Headteacher will write to any parents where attendance causes concern.

Absence due to illness

Parents are asked to telephone/email before 9am on the first day of absence due to illness, to explain why their child is not in school. In the absence of any communication from parents, the school office staff will attempt to make contact to ensure the child is safe.

The school follows the Public Health Agency guidelines regarding the recommended times that children should be kept away from school following an infection. In particular, please note that children should not return to school for a period of 48 hours from the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea.

Medical appointments

For medical appointments, a note should be handed to the class teacher and it is sufficient to give this in on the morning of the appointment. However, it should be noted that it is expected that routine dental appointments and non-urgent medical appointments will normally be made outside school hours. Unless the appointment is unavoidable, it will be marked as unauthorised in the class register.

- Every absence needs to be reported to the school by email or phone call before 8:30 am
- An adult needs to authorise any absence; a child's word will not be accepted
- Every effort should be made to contact from the parent if there has not been a phone message
- Parents and carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence
- There will be a first day of absence phone call from the office for those families who have not contacted the school
- If staff have any concerns at all about attendance, they will alert the Attendance Officer

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

- Applications for special circumstances must be made to the headteacher in advance. Depending on the reason for the request, the headteacher will consider whether to authorise or unauthorise the absence.
- Evidence may be requested.
- The headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
- Each request will be considered individually.
- Holidays should not be taken during term-time.

Marking of Attendance Registers - guide to symbols

/am \pm Present

0 Absent – see symbol 'C'

L Late during registration period

U (inside 0) Late after registration period – indicate in notes box the time of arrival and reason given (note required from home)

Symbols for authorised absence:

B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by any other code)
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school)
E	Exclusion
F	Agreed extended family holiday
H	Agreed family holiday
I	Illness
J	Interview
M	Medical or dental appointment
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience (not work based training)
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory schooling
Y	Partial and forced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll yet
#	School closed to all pupils

Symbols for unauthorised absence:

G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of authorised holiday)
N	No reason for the absence provided yet
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes)

Promoting Regular Attendance

It is vital to remember that the vast majority of children at Forty Hill CE School arrive on time and every day. An important part of our Attendance Policy is that this good practice is commended and applauded publicly including certificates, awards, reports to parents and the school newsletter.

In order to do this we ensure parents are aware of the school's stance towards promoting regular attendance. At Forty Hill, this is done in a number of ways:

- Awarding of a teddy bear for the class with the best attendance on a weekly basis in our Achievement Assembly (*The absence of pupils with serious medical or SEND needs, or for those with necessary hospital appointments, will be taken into account when calculating the overall attendance for the week*)

- Report to parents on their child's attendance
- First day of absence phone calls are made by the Attendance Officer
- Letters of concern are sent to parents and carers when attendance drops below 95%, 93% and 91%, following which the Headteacher will meet with child's parents/carers
- The Attendance Officer will identify barriers to regular school attendance by working with parents and carers
- Educational Welfare Service will be asked for support when attendance or lateness continues to be a concern despite intervention by school

Following Up Attendance Issues – Procedures

The Termly EWS Meeting

Each term, the Attendance Officer meets with the EWS to discuss any concerns and follow up the progress of individuals. Prior to the meeting the following information is collected:

- Attendance record for any child with less than 90% attendance
- Attendance record for any child whose absence shows particular trends
- Attendance record for any child who has been frequently arriving at school late
- Class percentage totals

Information is shared about previous cases and decisions taken about the next stages of intervention where this is appropriate. Decisions taken are recorded on the attendance monitoring sheet. Following the meeting with the EWS, class teachers are notified of the outcome and agreed actions are discussed with the Attendance Officer and followed up as appropriate.

School Procedures in Cases of Intervention

Although a range of strategies and actions will be taken on an informal basis, a formal procedure is applied when an absence remains unexplained:

- First day of absence phone call made by the Attendance Officer
- Discussion on an informal level with the child/parent and reminder about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality
- If attendance remains erratic, letters are sent from school drawing attention to the child's attendance
- Parents/carers are invited to the school offering them the opportunity to meet with the Attendance Officer and EWS to discuss the pattern of attendance
- If the parents/carers do not attend the meeting, the next stage is for an approach to be made by the EWS either by letter or through a visit
- Further formal approaches might then be made according to the LA's attendance policy

Penalty Notices

The headteacher will report to the Governing Body in the 'Headteacher's Report' the attendance percentage for the school and on any specific trends and/or difficulties with individuals.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 gives schools the power to issue Penalty Notices in cases of non-school attendance. This is an alternative to prosecution. Prior to a Penalty Notice being issued, a formal warning letter will be sent to parents/carers advising that there will be a 15 day monitoring period for attendance to improve and for them to contact the Headteacher to discuss the school's concerns.

Currently the Penalty Notice is:

- A fine of £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent/carer per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days
- If the fine is not paid parents/carers may be prosecuted under the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of failing to ensure their child attends school

A warning that a Penalty Notice may be issued will be sent to both parents (where applicable) for any of the following reasons:

- Their child has an unauthorised absence
- Their child is taken on holiday during term-time and without permission
- Parentally condoned absences
- Truancy
- Persistent lateness after registers have closed

If a child continues to be absent without authorisation for 20 sessions or more (10 school days) during a three month period, the school may apply to the Education Welfare Service for a Penalty Notice to be issued. Where there are two parents/carers with parental responsibility, it is likely both will receive a Fixed Penalty Fine.

The Governing Body reserves the right to authorise the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Accepted by the Governing Body: March 2024

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