



Forest Town Primary School

Attendance Policy
September 2017

Aims of this policy

- To ensure safeguarding systems are in place in relation to attendance and punctuality
- To raise attendance.
- To improve punctuality.
- To make attendance a priority for the whole school including governors, pupils, parents and staff.

Parents' Responsibilities

Under section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs that a child might have.

School's Responsibilities

It is the school's responsibility to regularly and effectively monitor school attendance and to inform parents and governors of their findings.

Procedures

School is required to complete the attendance register at the start of the school day and at the beginning of the afternoon session. The register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

All absences are treated as unauthorised unless or until the school agrees on a satisfactory explanation. It is the Head Teacher, not the parent, who authorises the absence.

Authorising Absence

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school of a child's absence and the reasons for this via:

- a phone call – 01623 477211
- email – office@foresttownprimaryschool.co.uk
- letter

If no contact has been received by 9:00am on the first day of absence, then wherever possible, school will telephone the parents before 12.00pm midday.

- If the contact phone call has been unsuccessful in establishing a reason for absence, the attendance officer will send an absence enquiry letter.
- If this is not returned within 5 days from the date it is sent, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

If the parent notifies the school of the reason for a child's absence, but the child continues to be absent for more than 5 days, then an update check will be made by the school in the form of a telephone call.

School will authorise absences once they have received an adequate explanation, i.e. illness; a medical appointment that cannot be arranged outside of school hours (the child should still attend as much of the session as they can); religious holidays; family bereavements; or exceptional family circumstances.

School reserves the right to refuse to authorise an absence where they feel the reason given is not a valid excuse.

Registration

Registers are completed at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. If a child arrives at school after registers have been marked, but before 9:15am, they will receive a 'Late' mark (L) in the register, which is authorised. If a child arrives after 9:15am, once registers are closed, they will receive a different 'Late' mark (U), which is an unauthorised absence.

A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. The codes and their meaning can be found in Appendix 1.

Family Holidays in Term Time

We do not authorise any absences for holidays taken during term time except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. death in family which requires more than one day of absence due to travelling, etc.).

All requests must be made in writing to the Head Teacher, **4 weeks prior** to the holiday being taken. The Headteacher will then write to parents to inform them of his decision. Any holiday that has not been authorised will be classed as an unauthorised absence. The refusal of authorisation letter will acknowledge otherwise good attendance where appropriate.

Persistent Absence

- It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school of the reasons for this via a phone call, email or letter.
- If no contact has been made by the parent/carer, the school office will attempt to make contact to find out the reason for absence. If a valid reason is secured, the absence is authorised unless the pupil is classed as a persistent absentee, then the absence will only be authorised with medical evidence. This can be in the form of letter from the hospital, doctor's appointment card, text appointment time and date from doctors or the back of a prescription issued.
- If no contact has been made after day three of absence, then the school office may ring emergency contacts on the pupil information form, if unsuccessful then a home visit may be carried out.
- If the contact phone call has been unsuccessful in establishing a reason for absence, the attendance officer will send an absence enquiry letter.
- If this is not returned within 5 days from the date sent, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Where the Office Administrator not satisfied with the reason given for a particular absence or period of persistent absence, the child's name will be given as soon as possible to the designated member of staff for monitoring absence (The Attendance Officer).
- This will also be highlighted to the Headteacher and Attendance Governors as part of the school's monitoring arrangements.
- The registers are audited by the Headteacher and Attendance Governors on a regular basis and pupils whose absence is causing concern are identified with actions decided with the school. This may result in one of the following actions being taken dependent on the stage the process is at:
 - A letter sent home from the school highlighting the concerns.
 - Further monitoring of absence carried out by the school to see if there are quick improvements.
 - A letter requesting actual medical proof of any absences lost through persistent medical absences.
 - An offer of support from the Family Support Worker.
 - An invitation to an Attendance Panel meeting run by the school for parents/carers.
 - An invite for parents to attend an Attendance Course run by the Family Support Worker and the Attendance Officer.
 - A Family Service Referral made to the Early Help Unit.
 - The serving of a Penalty Notice with accompanying fine.
 - Legal proceedings taken supported by the Local Authority. (See appendix 2)

A report is made to Governors each term through the Head Teacher's report.

Children missing from Education

For children who are on roll but not attending but whereabouts are known:

- School will continue to make contact with the parent by telephone or email for the first 2 days.
- On day 3 school will try to make contact with any other emergency contact on the child's contact form.
- If by day 5 there has still been no contact with parents/carers the arrangements will be made to carry out a home visit and a letter will be posted to the home address giving time and date of the visit. If there are safeguarding concerns, then a home visit may be carried out without informing parents/carers first. If no contact is made from a home visit, then a letter asking parents/carers to contact school will be posted through the letter box.
- We will continue to try and contact parents/carers via telephone/email until the child has been missing for 10 days. After day 10 a referral to the Early Help Unit may be made.

For children who are on roll but not attending and whereabouts are not known:

- School will try to make contact with the parents/carers by telephone, e-mail and letter if address is known.
- On day 3 school will try to make contact with any other emergency contact on the child's contact form.
- After full efforts to make contact with the family have not been successful then a referral is made to the Children Missing Officer (CMO) no later than day 10 of the absence.

Persistent Lateness

- Children who are late must report to the school office and a late mark is entered in the register. The children are given a red card which notifies teachers that the child has been marked in the late book.
- Lateness is monitored by the Attendance Officer who will report to the Headteacher on a fortnightly basis.
- A letter is sent to parents of children who are persistently late and the impact of these letters along with patterns of punctuality is closely monitored.
- The registers are audited by the Headteacher and Attendance Governors on a regular basis and pupils whose lateness is causing concern are identified with actions decided with the school. This may result in one of the following actions being taken dependent on the stage the process is at:
 - A letter sent home from the school highlighting the concerns.
 - Further monitoring of lateness carried out by the school to see if there are quick improvements.
 - Informal meeting between attendance officer and parents.
 - Support from the Family Support Worker.
 - An invitation to an Attendance Panel meeting run by the school for parents / carers.
 - An invite for parents to attend an Attendance Course run by the Family Support Worker and the Attendance Officer.
 - A Family Service Referral made to the Early Help Unit.
 - A Penalty notice may be issued where a pupil is persistently late for 10 separate instances over a period of six school weeks and where these are signified as a 'U' in the attendance register.
 - Legal proceedings taken supported by the Local Authority. (See appendix 2)

Monitoring Arrangements

Internal monitoring will take place on a half termly basis by the Headteacher and Attendance Governors.

Promoting Attendance

Weekly

- Each class with 98%+ for the previous week will receive a 'voucher', they then decide as a class if they would like to spend their voucher or save it for a better reward e.g. extra play time, forest school session.
- The class from each team with the highest attendance for the previous week will receive a certificate and one of our attendance mascots.
- Where possible, these rewards will be presented in a Mentions assembly

End of each half term

Individual rewards will be awarded to children with 97%+ attendance for the whole half term (96%+ for Spring 2 due to short half term). This does equate to no more than 1 day of absence.

Children will be able to choose the reward they would like and take a voucher. Class teachers will record what is chosen to support planning. Children will receive their reward early in the next half term (except summer 2) and they will hand in their voucher to redeem their reward.

End of each term

Same rewards as for the end of half term plus a certificate of good attendance.

End of school year

Children with 100% attendance for the whole school year will be entered into a prize draw with all children achieving 100% attendance winning a reward

The Year 6 leaver with the best attendance throughout primary school (at FTSP) will receive a certificate, trophy and prize.

This policy was approved by the Governing Body in the Autumn Term 2017

Policy to be reviewed annually

Appendix 1

ATTENDANCE CODES

CODE	SCHOOL MEANING	STATISTICAL MEANING	PHYSICAL MEANING FOR SESSION
/	Present (am)	Present	In
\	Present (pm)	Present	In
B	Educated off site	Approved Educational Activity	Out
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised	Out
D	Dual Registration	Present	Out
E	Excluded	Authorised	Out
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised	Out
G	Family holiday/Extended family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised	Out
H	Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised	Out
I	Illness	Authorised	Out
L	Late (before register closed)	Present	Late
M	Medical/Dental appointment	Authorised	Out
N	No reason yet provided	Unauthorised	Out
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised	Out
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Present	Out
R	Religious Observance	Authorised	Out
T	Traveller absence	Authorised	Out
U	Late (after register closed)	Unauthorised	Late
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity	Out
X	DFE#: School closed to pupils	Attendance not required	Out
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out
#	School closed to pupils and staff	Attendance not required	Out

Appendix 2

Penalty Notices toolkit

A guide for schools for issuing penalty notices October 2012

Considering whether to take legal action

Ensuring Children's right to their education can be addressed through a range of different interventions. Prosecution options as detailed in this policy may be used as a last resort to these interventions or as the only appropriate response, however in all cases they must be applied fairly and in the public interest.

There must be sufficient admissible evidence for there to be a realistic prospect of conviction before a prosecution can be undertaken. You must also consider whether there may be evidential difficulties at all stages of the process, and whether additional evidence may be required.

Public interest

The Local Authority and schools should consider prosecution (or recommending prosecution) where it is appropriate to draw attention to the need for compliance with the law and to deter others.

General Conduct

School and LA staff involved in prosecutions for irregular school attendance should act in line with the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

Key points to be aware of are:

- A duty to ***be fair, independent and objective***, not letting any personal views about ethnic or national origin, sex, religious beliefs, political views or the sexual orientation influence decisions and not being affected by improper or undue pressure from any source.
- Obligation to ***act in the interests of justice*** and not solely for the purpose of obtaining a conviction.
- A duty to review, advise on and prosecute cases, ***ensuring that the law is properly applied, that all relevant evidence is put before the court*** and that obligations of disclosure are complied with.
- A duty to act in accordance with the ***Human Rights Act 1998***.

Appropriate Action

There are no hard and fast rules when deciding the most appropriate type of prosecution to take. The LA must make a professional decision as to what they consider to be the most effective way of dealing with each individual case and be able to justify that decision. It is vital that the child's interest and welfare should be at the centre of any such decision. You will need to take into consideration various factors of the case, such as:

- Age of child.
- Number of children in the family.
- The possible effect on other siblings.
- The extent of the non-attendance.
- Family history regarding school attendance.
- Previous convictions.
- Whether parenting support would be more appropriate to prosecution.

Parental responsibility

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude

Explanation of the Nottinghamshire Code of Conduct

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 (introduced by section 23 of the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003) introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under section 444. Parents may discharge potential liability for conviction for an offence under section 444(1) by paying a penalty.

Nottinghamshire County Council has a code of conduct to enable penalty notices to be issued by authorised persons for truancy or where a pupil is found to be in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Consultation with governors, head teachers and the Chief Constable took place before the code received Cabinet approval in December 2007.

The purpose of the local code of conduct is to ensure that the power to issue penalty notices is applied consistently and fairly across the local authority area and that suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the scheme.

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance or whereabouts but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so.

The law states that authorised LA staff, Head Teachers and school staff authorised by them (deputy/assistant heads), the Police, Community Support Officers and accredited persons may issue Penalty Notices, although there is no requirement for them to do so. However, schools should be aware that Nottinghamshire County Council Local Authority through their code of conduct has retained the responsibility for issuing Penalty Notices on their behalf.

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 (introduced by section 23 of the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003) introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under section 444. Parents may discharge potential liability for conviction for an offence under section 444(1) by paying a penalty.

The penalty is set at £120 and should be paid within 28 days of the date on which the notice starts. If the penalty is paid within 21 days of the date on which the notice starts the sum is reduced to £60.

Where the issue of a penalty notice is requested it will be necessary for the LA to receive details of the pupil's absence and the evidence to be presented to the magistrates' court should the penalty be unpaid.

The standard of evidence required is the same as that required for court cases brought under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Where a penalty is unpaid, the Local Authority will take legal action under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence. In this case it is necessary for the person who requested the issue of a penalty notice to provide evidence for the court case by way of a Section 9 Statement (a witness statement admissible in court under the Criminal Justice Act and the Magistrates' Courts Act and Rules).

There is no flexibility in the deadline for payment of fines. Notices can only be withdrawn by the local authority to whom the fine is to be paid and in all instances will only be withdrawn where:

- A) It ought not to have been issued.
- B) It ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient.
- C) It appears to the authority that the notice contains material errors.
- D) It interferes with existing intervention strategies or legal proceedings.

Example letter warning of Penalty Notice for Holidays taken in term time

X School

5 April 2012

Mr XXX & Ms XXX

XXX Meadow Lane

Nottingham

NG7 5HP

Dear Mr XXX & Ms XXX

PENALTY NOTICE WARNING

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

I note your application to take out of education for days to go on holiday. This is not an automatic entitlement and may be categorised as an unauthorised absence from school.

I have considered your application and do not feel it would be appropriate to authorise this absence. As stated in the application you signed, unauthorised absence can lead to the issue of a penalty notice for irregular school attendance where a pupil is absent for more than 25% of the time in any six week period. If you do remove from school for the period stated in your application I will request that the local authority issues a penalty notice.

I am sure you will want to support our aim to make "Progress through Partnership with our students and to give them every chance of success in their learning. The school would not wish to see any student's opportunities to succeed impeded.

Yours sincerely

Ms XXX XXXX

Assistant Principal

Example letter warning of Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence

X School

5 April 2012

Mr XXX & Ms XXX

XXX Meadow Lane

Nottingham

NG7 5HP

Dear Mr XXX & Ms XXX

PENALTY NOTICE WARNING

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

The registers at X School show that, to date, your child has missed 32 sessions of school due to unauthorised absences over the last half term.

You, as parent, are legal responsible under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, for ensuring that your child attends school regularly. As such you are now being referred for a Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child.

You are hereby informed that a 15 day monitoring period will commence on Monday 16 April 2012 in order to improve your child's attendance and avoid a subsequent fine. Should your child have 5 or more sessions of unauthorised absence during the 15 day monitoring period, a Penalty Notice will be issued. Once issued, a Penalty Notice incurs a fine which will be payable to the Local Authority.

Please take steps to ensure your child gets to school on time every day and obtain medical evidence if he/she is too ill to attend. Any other reason for absence should be discussed with the school and it is the school's decision whether to authorise any absence that is not covered by medical evidence.

Yours sincerely

Mr XXX XXXX

Assistant Principal

Example of Case Notes:

Child X (dob xx/xx/xx)

5 April 2012

Letter sent home to Ms XXX, copied to Mr XXX advising that Formal Monitoring would commence on 16 April 2012 for a period of 15 days.

Copy of letter enclosed

19 April 2012

Child X advised Miss Form Tutor that his mother had been taken into hospital late on Monday 16/04/12 which is the reason he was absent from school on Tuesday 17/04/12 and Wednesday 18/04/12. The family provided the school with the wristband Ms XXX had worn whilst she was in hospital and as a result Child's absences for these two days were authorised.

Photocopy of wristband enclosed

30 April 2012

Child X provided medical proof of his attendance to the doctors due to illness. The medical proof covered his absences for 26/04/12 and 27/04/12.

Photocopy enclosed

30 April 2012

Confirmed truancy from Science. Child X admitted to going to the Cxxxxxx Fxxxxx instead of going to the Science lesson. As a result of the truancy Child X was placed on report by Year Group Manager. This means report card to be signed by tutor at each lesson. The report card has to be collected from the school office each morning and returned to the office end of each day. Child X has successfully handed in one complete report card – on 3/5/2012.

Copy reports enclosed

1 May 2012

Letter sent to Ms XXX and further copy sent to Mr XXX inviting them to attend meeting in school on 10/5/12 to discuss Child's attendance.

Copy letter enclosed

3 May 2012

Child X placed on an attendance/punctuality report for Child X to 'sign in' with me (Attendance Officer) in this office each morning before 8.30 am. Child X remained on the report until 25/05/12 and in that time only signed in twice. Child X was given a 'stay-back' during 1st break or lunchtime as a sanction for the occasions he was in school and did not sign in with me (Attendance Officer) however this sanction proved to be unsuccessful in improving Child X's timekeeping.

Copy of report enclosed

10 May 2012

Parents did not attend meeting regarding punctuality. Letter sent to Ms XXX with a further copy sent to Mr XXX as 2nd invitation to meet in school on 17.5.12.

Copy letter enclosed

17 May 2012

Parent did not attend 2nd meeting.

17 May 2012

Following an incident in school with a teacher, Child X left the site without permission and went home. Ms XXX and two members of his family arrived in school approx 11.30 am to discuss the incident with the teacher. During the meeting Child X's punctuality, attendance and behaviour were discussed.

Copy of Minutes of meeting enclosed

18 May 2012

Ms XXX contacted me (Attendance Officer) to inform the school that the family had argued about the school incident during the evening of 17/5/12 and as a result Child X had walked out of the family home and not returned. Ms XXX contacted the police who found Child X at a friend's home. Ms XXX told me the police had not returned Child X to the family home as he was deemed to be a safe environment.

Notes of telephone conversation between Ms XXX and Attendance Officer enclosed

21 May 2012

Child X did not attend his Biology exam. Mr XXX left a voicemail on the Pupil Absence phone number notifying us that Child X had an ear infection. To date medical evidence has not been received to confirm absence. Absence unauthorised.

Copy of exam timetable detailing missed exams enclosed

24 May 2012

Child X did not attend his English Literature exam. A phone call was made to home and Ms XXX told us that Child X was ill.

25 May 2012

Letter sent home to both parents advising that the paperwork to request for a Penalty Notice had been sent to Local Authority.

Copy letter enclosed

Additional notes

Truancy Call messages are sent and/or phone calls made to Mr XXX and Ms XXX when Child X is absent. We have not received any replies to text messages sent out since the Monitoring Period commenced and have received only 3 replies since September 2011.

Example letter to Local Authority requesting Penalty Notice to be issued

X School

Our Ref:

Targeted Support

Home Brewery Building

Sir John Robinson Way

Arnold

Nottingham

NG5 6DA

For the Attention of Senior Case Manager (Education Welfare)

Dear Senior Case Manager

Penalty Notice Request – Top School

I am requesting that Mr xxxxxxxx and Ms xxxxxx are issued with a Penalty Notice for failure to ensure that xxxx(child) (date of birth xx/xx/xx) attends school regularly.

I enclose a copy of the letters sent to Mr xxxxxxxx and Ms xxxxxx, a copy of child's attendance certificate, showing the unauthorised absences and a copy of the case notes.

I look forward to hearing how the case has progressed.

Yours sincerely

Mr xxxxxxxx

Principal

[Example letter advising parent that school have requested Penalty Notice to be issued for holiday in term time](#)

Our Ref:

Mr xxxxxxx & Ms xxxxxxx

XX Meadow Lane

Nottingham

NG7 5HP

Dear Mr xxxxxl & Ms xxxxxx

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

On April 5 2012 we wrote to you to explain that theSchool would not authorise(child name) absence from school for days for a holiday. We also informed you that this could lead to a Penalty Notice being issued to you.

I am now writing to advise you that a request has been made to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice because your child's attendance fell below 25% in a six week period

Should you wish to discuss any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mr xxxxxxxxx

Assistant Principal

[Example letter advising parent that school have requested Penalty Notice to be issued for unauthorised absence](#)

Our Ref:

Mr xxxxxxx & Ms xxxxxxx

XX Meadow Lane

Nottingham

NG7 5HP

Dear Mr xxxxxl & Ms xxxxxx

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Further to our letter dated 5 April 2012 notifying you that a 15 day period of formal monitoring would commence on 16 April 2012 for Child xx we are now writing to advise you that a request has been made to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice for failing to ensure that your child attends school regularly.

Should you wish to discuss any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mr xxxxxxxxx

Assistant Principal

Schedule for the issuing of Penalty Notices for holidays in term time

Parent applies for holiday	Reply to application in writing to explain that the holiday absence has not been approved and the absence will be unauthorised and that this may lead to a PN being issued
Child is absent for family holiday	Mark register as unauthorised
Child returns to school following holiday	Write to parent to explain that request has been made to LA for issuing PN
	Write to LA with all info necessary to issue a PN within 2 weeks of holiday.

Schedule for the issuing of Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence

Week 1	Home visit, letter or meeting held warning about the possibility of a Penalty Notice and seeking ways to resolve the situation
Week 2	Ongoing Support
Week 3	Wednesday. Write to Parent (s) giving 15 days to improve the attendance before the issue of a PN. Issuing on a Wednesday ensures the letter gets home in time for the period to begin Monday.
Week 4	Ongoing Support
Week 5	Ongoing Support
Week 6	Friday- Review attendance and refer to LA if necessary. Write to advise parents you are requesting a PN is issued to them. Write to LA with all info necessary to issue a PN.

Checklist for the issuing of Penalty Notices

Are there 25% Unauthorised absences over 6 weeks	
Is the attendance attached	
Is it <u>fair</u> to issue a PN? Suitable provision? Needs met? Support offered and fair warning given	
Who has parental responsibility? 1 or 2 parents at home?	
Are parent(s) first names given	
Are contemporaneous notes kept of all conversations, meetings and copies of letters also? It is easier if one person can keep these notes in case of a court case	

APPLICATION FOR REMOVAL FROM LEARNING DURING TERM TIME

EVERY DAY COUNTS

GOOD ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOL = GOOD PROGRESS

Attached is an application form for you to request permission for your child to be absent from school to take part in an annual family holiday. Before completing the application form, please read these notes carefully:

- The law states that you do not have the right to take your child out of school for holidays during term time. The Local Authority works with schools to reduce the numbers of children missing school because of holidays taken in term time and schools can refuse your request to take your child out of school.
- If you wish to take your child on holiday during term time, you must apply for permission at least 4 weeks in advance in writing using the attached form. Permission for authorised leave of absence may be granted for a holiday in special circumstances, totalling no more than two weeks in any school year. Please note the school year is from September to July.
- The Department for Education states that absence for holidays in term time due to the following reasons will not be authorised:
 - availability of cheap holidays
 - availability of desired accommodation
 - poor weather experienced in the school holiday period
 - overlap with beginning or end of term
 - holidays booked before checking with the school
 - day trips

(Keeping Pupil Registers – guidance in applying pupil registration regulations - DCSF September 2006)

- There are certain times of the year when a child may experience extra problems because of missing school. These include examination periods, at the time of starting a new school and at the start of a new school term.
- If the school refuse your application and you still take your child out of school the absences will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may lead to legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child to accompany you on holiday during term time then please complete the application attached. This form should be returned to your child's school as far in advance of the proposed holiday as possible.

Issued in conjunction with Nottinghamshire Education Welfare Service