

# Foxhill Primary School

*Excellence, Inclusion, Enjoyment*

*'Be the best that you can be'*

## Attendance policy



**Approved by:**

R Hainsworth

**Date:** 02/01/2024

**Last reviewed on:**

November 2023

**Next review due by:**

November 2025

Good attendance is vital if your child is to achieve and make good progress. Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure the best possible learning outcomes and life chances for all our children. To this end, we will do all we can to encourage parents to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any barriers that prevent attendance are identified and acted on promptly. The Governors at Foxhill and the Local Education Authority expect all parents to ensure that their children attend school whenever possible. All children are legally required to attend school for 190 days each academic year from the term following their fifth birthday, unless they are unable to attend through illness or exceptional circumstance. This may or may not be authorised by the Headteacher.

### **Expectations**

School starts at 8.45am for everybody. Children should be lined up and teachers' collect them from the playground. Doors will be open until 8.55am. Children arriving after this time must be signed in by their parents at the school office. If your child arrives after 9.00am they will receive a late mark in the register and parents of any child not present by 9.15am will receive a text from school.

Under section 457 of the Education Act 1996 and relevant regulations, the Governing Body has the right to impose a charge on parents/carers who fail to collect their child/ren from school within a reasonable time after the close of the school day or after school activity.

- Within the first 15 minutes parents/carers will try to be contacted using the numbers on the school system. After 15 minutes they will be taken to Fox Club (after hours care club) and a charge will be incurred. If they have not been collected after 30 minutes parents/carers will be charged the full (per child) fee for the after school session.

### **Attendance procedures**

Each school publishes their attendance procedure on their website. This will include the following information:

- Start and end time of term dates
- Start and end of the school day
- Time that children can enter school and the time the register closes
- Information and contact details of the school staff with responsibility for attendance
- Reasons for needing good attendance
- Consequences of poor attendance
- Procedures if late
- Procedures if absent from school, including methods of contact
- Procedures for returning after absence
- School procedures when pupil is absent
- How school is promoting and incentivising good attendance and punctuality
- School's strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most
- School's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority. The point at which Fixed Penalty Notices for absence and other sanctions will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g. for an unauthorised holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

### **Foxhill Attendance Protocol**

- Parents expected to call with child's absence by 9.00am
- First day phone calls for those children absent and no contact with school by 9.15am.
- Letters home for all below 90%
- Half termly meetings for those children below 85%
- Staff home visits when child is persistently absent

- Attendance reported to Governors every half term with number of persistent absentees.

### **Rewards for Attendance**

- In each Friday's 'Achievement Assembly' the class with the best attendance takes away the 'Attendance Trophy' for the week.
- At the end of each school year the class with the highest attendance earns a 'Treat Day'.

### **Understanding types of absence**

Every half day from school is classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED OR UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required and preferably in writing.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a valid and permissible reason such as illness, emergencies and other unavoidable causes, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time - Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school. Absences for religious observance will also be authorised.

**Unauthorised absences** are those that 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/carer's keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been authorised by the head teacher.

**\*\*If a child's attendance should fall below 95%, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence of a child's illness before authorising absence for illness.**

### **Illness**

When a child is absent due to illness, the absence will be authorised providing school has been notified by telephone or e-mail.

Please note, illness will not be authorised as a reason for absence where children have regular, minor illness that cannot be substantiated. If your child is absent from school for more than 48 hours and you have not notified the school office you will be required to fill in an absence form at the school office. If your child is absent for a week or more a doctor's note will be required.

If your child requires non-urgent medical or dental attention, you must try to arrange appointments outside school time. All absences for medical or dental appointments must be supported by providing the school office with sight of a copy of the appointment card or letter - only then will the absence be authorised.

### **Authorised absence due to religious observance**

Schools will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance, exclusively set apart by the religious body to which parents belong. Where necessary, schools will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. For religious observance, up to two days absence (one per festival) will be authorised. Any pupil who fails to return after the authorised absence will have their absence recorded as 'unauthorised'. No more than two occasions (festivals) per academic year will be authorised. If the festival occurs at the weekend or during school holidays, pupils will not be granted a day off.

### **Term Time Absence**

**The Governors at Foxhill adopt a strict approach to requests for holidays in term time.**

The Governors at Foxhill will not approve requests for holidays in term time. However, we do recognise that parents, may still go ahead and remove their children. For transparency you should be aware that Bradford Council (not the school) will issue Fixed Penalty Notices. These funds do not go to the school.

### **Absence without authorisation/Fixed Penalty Notice**

Any pupil who is absent from school without authorisation will have their absences recorded as 'unauthorised'. Any absence longer than a period of authorised absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. Pupils whose absence was unauthorised and fail to return within 20 days of the agreed date may be deleted from the roll, unless there is a credible reason for their continued absence. Repeated offences of leave of absence may result in the matter being directly prosecuted in local councils' magistrates' courts.

Penalty notices will be issued in accordance with the Bradford code of conduct (Copies available on request or from Bradford Schools Online)

Under the Code, Penalty Notices may be issued:

- If parents have not sought permission from the Headteacher before taking their child out of school in term-time;
- If the Headteacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway;
- If a pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation and the pupil remains on the roll of the school.

### **AND**

- Where the absence has been recorded by the school as unauthorised in the attendance register on at least 6 sessions (3 school days in any 6 week period).
- Penalty Notices will not be issued for term-time holiday with less than 3 days (6 sessions in any 6 week period) unauthorised absence.
- Penalty Notices cannot be issued if the parents/carers are known to be out of the country. They will be issued upon return.

- Penalty Notices cannot be issued against the parents/carers of children who are not of statutory school age
- The Penalty Notice is for £60 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

On very rare occasions, the Head Teacher may grant authorised leave of absence where there are exceptional and extenuating circumstances. Holidays in term time and extended leave are not classified as exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher will decide whether to authorise any application for absence. No parent can demand leave of absence for their child as a right. No person other than the Head Teacher can authorise term time absence. Any request for absence will be judged on a case by case basis, and the Head Teacher will use their discretion sparingly. When deciding whether to authorise the absence, the Head Teachers may take the following into consideration:

- the reasons for the requested absence;
- the wishes of the parent(s);
- the age of the child and their educational stage;
- the time of year for the proposed absence (for example, if it is near to any assessment dates);
- the child's overall attendance record (current academic year and past years);

Decisions to authorise/not authorise absence will be applied consistently and equitably. All requests **must** be made on a 'Leave of Absence Form' available from the school office or downloaded from the school website. The decision as to whether to authorise absence in term time will be communicated in writing.

### **Pupils with medical conditions or Special educational needs or disabilities**

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who

have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, schools should be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education, being mindful of the guidance:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1136965/Summary\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_where\\_a\\_mental\\_health\\_issue\\_is\\_affecting\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1136965/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf)

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.
- Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- In addition, schools should work with families to help support routines and the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance.
- Ensure data is regularly monitored for these groups including at the governing body meetings and in Pupil Progress Meetings. Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision



provided by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

In all cases, schools should be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents and they should talk to pupils and parents and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

### **Monitoring and review**

- This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed every 2 years or earlier if required.
- This policy was Updated November 2023 in line with DFE updated guidance published May 2022 Working together to improve school attendance which applies from September 2022 and 21.3 This should include:
  - Being mindful of the February 2023 guidance Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance.

<i>Reviewed</i>	November 2023
<i>Approved at the Governors meeting on</i>	01/02/2024
<i>Signed: Chair of Governors</i>	R Hainsworth
<i>Date of next Review</i>	November 2025