



Forefield Junior School

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

OVERVIEW

Forefield Junior School is committed to providing excellence for students of all abilities. High attendance and good punctuality is essential for students to work to their potential, be successful and benefit from the opportunities available to them at the School. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly.

Achieving high attendance is a necessity in preparing students for future working life as an adult. Students should be at the School, **on time and every day** that the School is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that parents and carers recognise the responsibility and obligation to make sure that students attend regularly. This Policy sets out how the School, its partners and parents/carers can work together to achieve this.

OBJECTIVES

- 1 To ensure that all learners attend school well.
- 2 To ensure that all learners are punctual.
- 3 To win the support of parents in ensuring that their children attend school well and that they arrive on time.
- 4 To keep good records of attendance through the school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
- 5 To investigate and act immediately where truancy is suspected or confirmed.
- 6 To work effectively with the LA and other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and efficiently.
- 7 To monitor closely pupils with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and where appropriate other agencies to bring about improvement.

STRATEGIES

- Parents will be asked to telephone or notify the school if their child is absent or ill, at the earliest opportunity. It is possible to leave a message on the school's answerphone before 8:30am.
- All staff will complete registers accurately for each session (SIMS electronic registers will be completed before 9:00am and 'sent' to the school office) and will alert HT/DHT of any absences that are a cause for concern.
- The school office will send a text message to the parents of any child who is absent without notification – this will be followed up by a telephone call if no contact is made with the school.

- If, after texts and phone calls there is still no contact, the HT/DHT will take further action (further phone calls, texts or home visits) to ascertain the welfare of the pupil/family.
- Where a learner is developing a pattern of 'occasional' absences the parent will be contacted by letter and informed of the issues. The HT/DHT will continue to monitor the attendance and strive to work with the family to find solutions.
- We also send positive letters where attendance has improved or is consistently exemplary.
- Where necessary, the school will work closely with the LA to take action against those unlawfully keeping learners from school.
- Attendance & Punctuality are promoted daily in school – with the aim of hitting our 97% Attendance target. Weekly assemblies focus on attendance and the school council receive £10 to spend on playground equipment every time our target is reached. Attendance Boards display our current attendance and Information regarding attendance/lateness is shared in newsletters.

LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student 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 students also disrupt lessons. Persistent poor punctuality will be highlighted to parents and the school will work with parents to resolve issues.

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCES

Every half-day absence from the School has to be classified by the School (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**.

Registers are taken twice a day by staff to record attendance marks for class.

Registers are legal documents so the School staff are obliged to complete them accurately. Attendance marks are also recorded at every lesson to monitor student punctuality and guard against truancy. Information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers, preferably in writing.

Authorised

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the School for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in School time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised

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.

- Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, parents/carers

should not condone their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending as this gives the child the impression that attendance does not matter.

EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE IN TERM TIME

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off during school term time to have exceptional 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 attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Holiday during Term Time

It is the school's policy not to grant holidays in term time – unless there are exceptional circumstances. Students have a total of 13 weeks holiday a year so parents should only request that they be able to take their child out of school under **exceptional circumstances**. This must be applied for in writing addressed to the Headteacher – forms are available from the school office. In this letter parents/carers should make clear the reasons why it is necessary to take their child(ren) out of school. Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's education and this is not acceptable. All application letters should be made in advance – allowing enough time for consideration to be made.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects. Forefield Junior School expects parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority.

CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

"All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures." (Keeping Children Safe In Education 2018)

Our school will hold at least two contact numbers for every child. These will be used as part of the First Day Calling process. It is good practice to give our school additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education, is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

No child will be removed from roll without consultation between the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and the Attendance & Welfare Service. Where a child is missing from education with prolonged absences that are unexplained or if a family move away from the area but do not register with another school, the school will alert the local authority who will then take action according to child missing in education policy and procedures. Movement of children between local authorities and schools is tracked nationally.

OUTCOMES

The school will do all it can to ensure that learners come happy, willingly and punctually to school to ensure that all gain the greatest possible value from their education and are PROUD to be FOREFIELD.