



FOUNTAINS

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Always achieving our potential

Attendance Policy

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Policy Owner: Mrs Laura Kobylanski (Deputy Headteacher)

Ratified: Mrs Nicola Price (Headteacher)/

Local Governing Body (October 2023)



ALWAYS ACHIEVING OUR POTENTIAL



1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The Link Governor for attendance is responsible for meeting with the Assistant Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher to monitor pupil attendance.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Laura Kobylanski and can be contacted via the school office (enquiries-primary@fountains.staffs.sch.uk)

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/Deputy Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Jo Cowlshaw and can be contacted via the school office (enquiries-primary@fountains.staffs.sch.uk)

3.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 930am.

3.6 School Office/ Medical Team Staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Medical/Well being team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 855am on the day of the absence or alternatively report their child's absence through the Reach More Parents communication app. This needs to be completed for each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 855am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 905am and will be kept open until 930am

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 855am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7).

We will mark absence with the appropriate code as communicated by the parent/carer unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the absence.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents should request a leave of absence by writing in the home school diary. This needs to be photocopied and kept in the child's main file as well as on the Integris system.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Ongoing punctuality issues will be brought to the Senior Leaderships attention through Leadership Team meetings. The Deputy Headteacher discuss issues with the most appropriate team eg... transport providers, Early Helps Teams such Malachi, East Staffs Family Support Team; The Esteem MATs Family Support Team (FASST), East Staffordshire Advice Support Service, Social Services, Derbyshire Starting Point and Fountains Primary Schools Well Being Team.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may call the family's social worker/first response.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through half termly reports attached to each child's attendance report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as situations such as weddings/funerals/ death of a close relative/ housing crisis/ safeguarding crisis, issues relating to transport.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- A bespoke holiday when a child is accessing a SEN provision/holiday involving a significant memorable moment and their attendance is over 95%

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Fountains Primary School we use a variety of strategies to promote good attendance and improve overall attendance.

- We employ (partly subsidised from our pupil premium money) a full time medical team and wellbeing team to support and improve school attendance. They support families with all medical issues and appointments, ensuring that wherever possible, all possible medical appointments are made outside of school hours. We also invite a range of professionals into school (doctors, speech therapists, physiotherapist etc..) to hold meetings and carry out assessments during the day.
- We use the schools varied Early Help offer (partly subsidised from our pupil premium money) to support good attendance. This can be our own wellbeing team or the Esteem MATs Team (FASST).
- The Deputy Headteacher offers proactive support and guidance for families to improve and sustain their child's attendance by using a range of professional to provide home visits, phone calls, advice on medicals appointments, referrals to and working in partnership with outside agencies to achieve this aim.
- All classes offer stay and play/learn sessions, during these times staff remind parents of the importance of good attendance.
- The school sends out a half termly attendance report
- The school sends out outstanding attendance certificates to anyone who has over 95% attendance alongside celebrating all improving attendance and these children are celebrated on the attendance display
- All children who have 100% attendance in a half term are celebrated in assemblies at the end of every half term, regardless of the previous terms' attendance. At the end of the year all children who have 100% attendance receive an award and a prize.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Class Teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Hold attendance clinics to support parents/carers to improve their child's overall attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Laura Kobylanski (Deputy Headteacher). At every review, the policy will be ratified by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. The Department of Education make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. At Fountains Primary School this authorisation has been sent to the Deputy Headteacher.
2. Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, **request a leave of absence form from the school office and send it to the Deputy Headteacher**. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. The Deputy Headteacher cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
4. Fountains Primary School understand the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children, receive the best education and prospects, they should be in school during term time.
5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the school will take account of:-
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
 - the overall attendance pattern of the child
 - frequency of similar requests
 - whether the parent made the request in advance
 - students on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
6. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The Deputy Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, we may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
7. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
8. Once a decision has been made by the Deputy Headteacher the parent/carer will then receive a letter to state whether the request for leave of absence has been authorised or unauthorised. If you choose to take the unauthorised leave of absence then you will be referred to Staffordshire County Council which may result in you being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.
Once the penalty notice is issued parents have 28 days to pay the Penalty Notice. Parents/carers of the child/ren will have up to 21 days to pay £60 per parent per child, however this amount doubles to £120 for the remainder 7 days, giving the individual parent/carer a total of 28 days to pay the penalty notice. This is in line with the Staffordshire Code of Conduct.
9. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support head teachers in challenging parents who ignore the law.

*Generally the DfE states that parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

Procedures for Fining Children

