



Attendance Policy

January 2019

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Awaiting ratification by Governors

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The aim of Foxford School's attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all students. Regular attendance at school is key to student progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring that its attendance policy is adhered to.

Foxford School takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the responsibility of parents, students, and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be.

We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead to poor attendance are given the appropriate support. However, by law, parents whose children are of compulsory school age and registered at school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they fail to do this they are guilty of an offence and may be given a penalty notice or prosecuted under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

This policy is supported by our policies on Safeguarding and Child Protection, Anti-bullying, Children Missing Education and Engagement for Learning.

Attendance Policy - Aims and Objectives

- To maintain the school attendance level at or above 95%;
- To reduce the level of unauthorised absence to be in line with national figures;
- To reduce the number of students who are persistently absent (90% and below) to be in line with national figures;
- To continue to develop positive and consistent communication between home and school and in doing so provide support, advice, and guidance to parents and students;
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all stakeholders including parents, students, teachers and governors (Appendix 1);
- To continue to utilise a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data;
- To utilise the rewards system to recognise and celebrate good and improving attendance;
- To improve students attainment through good attendance;
- To safeguard students.

Authorised Absence

Absences will be authorised by tutors during registration when a student presents the tutor with a valid reason and a note from their parent/carer. Absences will also be authorised from contact via parents/carers and from replies to first day texting/emails using the appropriate codes on the system (Appendix 2).

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence occurs when a student is absent and no explanation is provided by parents/carers or the explanation given is unacceptable to the school. The school will ensure that parents/carers understand that it is their responsibility by law to make sure that their child attends school. This is done through regular newsletters home, at parents/carers evenings, progress review days and at the induction evening for new students.

Parents/carers and students are reminded that punctuality is also their responsibility.

Absences not authorised within one week will be marked as unauthorised absences. Continual unauthorised absence will lead to a Fixed Penalty notice (Appendix 4).

Leave of Absence during term-time

From 1st September 2013 the school **has not** granted any leave of absence during term time unless there have been exceptional circumstances.

Government guidelines state “The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave”.

Parents/carers can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

Exceptional Circumstances

If the Attendance Officer considers the request to be within the remit of “exceptional circumstances” they will discuss the request with the Deputy Head teacher with responsibility for Attendance, authorised by the Head Teacher to give final approval.

Taking an annual family holiday during term time is not an example of exceptional circumstances and therefore will not be authorised by the school.

If a parent takes their child on holiday in term-time without the school’s permission, this will be recorded as unauthorised holiday on the student’s school attendance record. **If this absence exceeds 10 sessions (five school days) then the school will apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued in every case.**

If a student has not returned to school within 10 school days of the expected date of return, the Head Teacher may authorise the student to be taken off roll.

The school has a clear set of procedures that are followed if parents intend to take children out of school in term-time. This is to ensure that **safeguarding procedures** are followed and the school is fully aware of where a student is during term time.

- Parents / carers must complete a formal request form and return it to the school a minimum of **four weeks** prior to the expected absence (these forms are obtained from the Hub, Appendix 3);

- The form must be handed to the Hub for the attention of the Attendance Officer to make a decision on whether the parental request fulfils “exceptional circumstances”. This decision will be made in consultation with the Deputy Head teacher with responsibility for Attendance.
- The Attendance Officer will contact parents to discuss the request in every case to reinforce the expectation that leave of absence/holidays should not be taken during term time. If the request does not fulfil the criteria of “exceptional circumstances” the Attendance Officer will make parents aware that the leave of absence/holiday will be classed as an unauthorised absence and that a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued if the absence exceeds 10 sessions (5 school days). This contact will be made within 5 days of the request form being handed into the school.
- If the Attendance Officer is concerned that there is a potential safeguarding risk to a child then parents will need to attend a meeting in school with a member of staff who is a Designated Person for Child Protection to discuss further the reasons for travel. Where concerns still persist an urgent referral will be made to the appropriate agency (the Police and/or Social Care).
Potential safeguarding risks include;
 - a) Reasons for travel being unclear or further clarification needed
 - b) Families travelling to areas of the world considered to be higher risk (updated information available at <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>)
 - c) Concerns around PREVENT and the schools’ duty under The Counter Terrorism and Security Act July 2015
 - d) Concerns of female students being at risk of Female Genital Mutilation
- Parents/ carers are not entitled to ask for work to be set by teachers if the leave of absence/holiday is unauthorised by the school.
- Leave of absence request forms will be retained in the student’s file.

In the case of students who have recently arrived in Britain, special care will be taken to ensure that the policy has been clearly explained and understood during the induction process, taking into account that the parents’ first language may not be English and they may be unfamiliar with the education system in this country. Parents/carers will be advised to time their holiday to overlap official school holidays.

Removing Pupils from Roll

The school has a statutory duty to inform the local education authority of any student who fails to attend the school regularly or has been absent without the school’s permission for more than 10 days. For students who do attend school for a period of 4 school weeks (20 consecutive days) and where reasonable enquiries have been made by the school, the student may be taken off roll. Students can also be removed from roll after a period of 20 days if they no longer live within reasonable distance of the school. The decision to remove a student from the school roll will be taken by the Deputy Head teacher, in discussion with the Head Teacher.

In this case a missing persons report will be issued with respect to safeguarding the student. LA procedures and guidelines will be adhered to (Missing Children – Procedures and Protocols).

Note:

Reasonable Enquiries – This is where the school and/or external agencies cannot establish the whereabouts of a child and/or where the school or external agencies have made visits and have not seen the child on the visit(s); at the earliest possible moment this will trigger the LA ‘Missing Children – Procedures and Protocols’.

Closure of Registers

The registers will close at 9.30am on each school day. Students arriving after the start of registration but before 9.30am will be marked as L. Students arriving after the register has closed will be marked with a U if no appropriate reason for absence is given. This counts as an unauthorised absence (see Appendix 4 for information on Fixed Penalty Notices for lack of punctuality).

Appendix 1

Procedures

Role of Parents and Carers

- Ensure that your child arrives at school by 8.50am each day;
- Ensure that your child only misses school for reasons that are unavoidable or justified, such as genuine illness or days of religious observance. Wherever practical, dental and medical appointments should be made outside of the school day;
- Always notify school on the first morning of absence by contacting 02476369200;
- Do not take holidays during term time;
- Take an active interest in your child's school life and learning;
- Ensure that your child goes to bed at an appropriate time and that they are not accessing technology instead of sleeping;
- Contact school to speak with the relevant Tutor, Director of Learning or the Attendance Officer if you are concerned that your child is reluctant to attend.

Whole school strategies:

- Primary attendance data is collected and analysed when Year 7 join to ensure early intervention;
- Registers are taken for all lessons;
- Contact is made with parents on the first day of a student's absence via text/email or phone if no reason for absence has been provided;
- Letters are sent after absence if contact not made by parents;
- Attendance figures are published on a weekly basis for staff and students;
- Attendance figures are monitored each week by the relevant Director of Learning, the Attendance Officer and the Deputy Head Teacher. Attendance figures are produced for Governing Body meetings and for external audit;
- Attendance is linked into whole school rewards; all students with 100% attendance are automatically issued with an achievement point weekly.
- Attendance figures are collated termly and 100% attenders receive a personal certificate and congratulation from Head Teacher at the end of the term and end of the year;
- Positive letters are sent to good attenders and letters of concern to poor attenders;
- Target groups are identified and intervention is put in place;
- Targets are set for individuals by Tutor/ Progress Reviewer and for tutor groups by Director of Learning;
- Attendance is recorded on each students school report;
- Discussions/meetings with parents include positive and negative impact of attendance on learning;
- Students complete a weekly 'Attendance Log' to record their weekly attendance figures in their organisers;
- Students are given a chance to review their ongoing attendance rate during registration and tutor period;
- Students are given the opportunity to reflect on their attendance rate during Progress Review Day;
- Attendance Figures are shared weekly with tutor teams and attendance is celebrated through assemblies.

Role of Deputy Head teacher:

- Strategic oversight, review and evaluation of the whole school approach to attendance (including attendance linked to safeguarding) including oversight of census data;
- Advise and support the Family Support Workers, Attendance Officer and Directors of Learning;
- Monitor whole school attendance and punctuality figures (Individuals and target groups), compare data, last term, current term against last year's figures, identify trends and ensure appropriate intervention;
- Present attendance figures and analyses of data for Leadership, Governing Body meetings and external agencies;
- Agree "exceptional circumstance" leave of absence;
- Make decisions (with Head teacher) around removing students from roll and ensure LA guidelines and protocols are adhered to;
- Make all decisions about the Fixed Term Exclusion of students (with the Head teacher).
- Line manage the work of the Family Support Workers, the Attendance Officer, the Directors of Learning and the Inclusion Administration Officer to ensure quality assurance and accountability around attendance.

Role of Family Support Workers:

- Liaise with, advise and support the Attendance Officer around issues of attendance relating to safeguarding children on plans (Child Protection, Child in Need and CAFs) as appropriate;
- To support the Attendance Officer to complete paper work on students missing from education, in liaison with the Attendance Officer;
- Be a home-school link, supporting the Attendance Officer to make home visits as appropriate to need.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding around extended leave of absence requests.

Role of the Attendance Officer:

- Co-ordinate the whole school approach to attendance, including the monitoring of registers;
- Co-ordinate data on attendance for whole school and ensure that it is given weekly to Directors of Learning and SLT;
- Oversee interventions by the Pastoral Teams;
- Advise and support the Directors of Learning and other staff around all issues of attendance;
- Meet with individual Directors of Learning fortnightly to update interventions;
- Liaise with Pastoral Support Co-ordinators (Hub) to ensure vulnerable student list is updated weekly for first day calling;
- Identify students on the third day of absence with no known reason and intervene accordingly;
- Administer, monitor and evaluate attendance plans, focussing on students below 93% attendance who are in danger of becoming persistent absentees;
- Advise parents over issues of attendance;
- Work proactively with students to ensure good attendance;
- In co-ordination with Directors of Learning, ensure that key members of staff are aware of low attenders, persistent absentees, truants etc. and issues that are impacting on the poor attendance of individuals;
- Identify when Fixed Penalty Notices are required and liaise with the Local Authority;
- Co-ordinate the certification process to reward good levels of attendance;
- Liaise with parents, Directors of Learning, the Family Support Workers and Deputy Head teacher with respect to requests for extended leave in term time.

- Hold meetings with external agencies to discuss interventions for persistent absentees (90% and below);
- To complete paper work on students missing from education;
- Removal of students from role (under direction of Deputy Head teacher);
- Collate and maintain the spreadsheets for punctuality and completion of sanctions by students, liaising with the Progress Support Mentors daily;

Role of Director of Learning:

- Advise on and implement whole school strategies for attendance;
- Make attendance a priority issue within the year group through;
 - Staff Briefing with tutors
 - Regularly visiting tutor groups
 - Assemblies
 - Parents evenings, Progress Review days and Information evenings
 - Parental meetings
 - Liaison with Attendance Officer and Pastoral Support Co-ordinators
- Monitor and update registers daily;
- Monitor and analyse year group's attendance (individually and target groups) weekly, identify trends and co-ordinate the pastoral response;
- Meet with Attendance Officer fortnightly to update interventions;
- Direct contact with parents (through letters, phone calls and meetings) at identified points;
- Ensure immediate contact is made with parents/carers if a student is suspected of truanting from school;
- Congratulate students on good/improved attendance and punctuality as appropriate;
- Co-ordinate a plan for return of long-term absentees/truants, liaising with students, parents, teachers, pastoral staff, Learning Zone, SENCO, EAL Co-ordinator and Careers Advisor as appropriate to need;
- Monitor the completion of the weekly 'Attendance Record Logs' in student organisers;
- Make the Pastoral Support Co-ordinators and Admin Assistants aware of any changes to individual student timetables immediately;
- In co-ordination with the Attendance Officer, ensure that key members of staff are aware of low attenders, persistent absentees, truants etc. and issues that are impacting on the poor attendance of individuals;
- Lead and co-ordinate the setting of tutor group and individual attendance targets.

Role of Form Tutor:

As the first point of contact with students, tutors are vital in promoting good attendance and punctuality.

- Take a register, promptly, every morning. If I.C.T. system is not working, a paper register must be taken and handed into the Hub;
- Ask for explanations of absences from students on their return to school;
- Follow up on a daily basis during registration, where appropriate;
- Call parents for explanations of absences, as appropriate;
- Look out for any trends/patterns in a student's attendance record and inform the Director of Learning of any specific attendance concerns during briefing;
- Inform Pastoral Support Co-ordinators (Hub) of future known absences (e.g. hospital appointment, dental etc);

- Discuss attendance figures with class on a weekly basis. Display weekly attendance figure on notice board in tutor room;
- Use praise to reinforce good attendance and challenge lateness and poor attendance;
- Ensure pupils complete their 'Attendance Log' on a weekly basis. Work with individual students to set personal attendance targets. (weekly/termly);
- Discuss all lateness with individual students and emphasise the importance of punctuality;
- Monitor key students within their tutor group as directed by the Director of Learning.

On the return of students, tutors should encourage students to catch up with any missing work and avoid any negative comments as this will be counterproductive to all the effort it has taken to get the student into school.

Role of Pastoral Support Co-ordinators (Hub):

- Contact parents by text/ email/ phone on the first day of absence, making vulnerable students a priority;
- Ensure registers are updated as appropriate;
- Liaise weekly with the Attendance Officer to update list of vulnerable children;
- Liaise daily with pastoral staff and Attendance Officer about communication of absences and lates;
- Liaise with Attendance Officer to facilitate certificates for attendance;
- Generate attendance letters to be sent home to parents, under the direction of Directors of Learning and Attendance Officer;

Role of Inclusion Admin Assistant:

- Support with data analysis for Deputy Head teacher and Attendance Officer;
- Ensure tutor group and year group attendance figures are published in the weekly student and staff notices.

Role of Admin Assistant:

- Completion of census data, in discussion with Deputy Head teacher;
- Entering data on new students on SIMS;
- Co-ordination of timetables for all students, with Directors of Learning and Directors of Teaching and Learning.

Role of Progress Support Mentors:

- Promote positive attendance through intervention work completed with students;
- Administer the punctuality sanctions.

Role of Subject Teachers:

- Take a register each lesson. If I.C.T. system is not working, a paper register must be taken and sent to the Hub;
- Plan work for students absent through medical issues, either to send home via the pastoral team or to assist on pupils' return;
- Offer positive support to students when they return from absence;
- Acknowledge student return from absence, avoiding negative/sarcastic comments as evidence shows that these are counterproductive;

- Make the Admin Assistant in the office aware of any changes to class lists or rooms immediately;
- Log truancy issues as a consequence on the school system and facilitate the consequence, as appropriate.

Quality Assurance

1. There will be clear lines of accountability to ensure that the attendance strategy is consistently applied. Attendance will be a consistent feature of line management meetings as appropriate.
2. There will be a coherent and co-ordinated response:-
 - To ensure the school's curriculum is broad and balanced and is meeting the needs of all students;
 - To ensure that students continue to feel safe in school and that the pastoral systems support the emotional well-being of students;
 - To ensure that the number of fixed term exclusions is reduced;
 - To ensure that intervention strategies allow key students to be targeted earlier;
 - To ensure school attendance targets are met;
 - To ensure students who have been long term absentees are phased back appropriately into the curriculum.
2. The Deputy Head teacher will ensure that overall statistics are monitored against targets, the previous half terms figures and the previous year's figures.
3. Directors of Learning will meet regularly and good practice will be shared.
4. Directors of Learning will address issues of poor attendance with tutors via year team meetings.
5. The review of the attendance policy and procedures will be on going.
6. Success will be measured by whether targets are met at all levels.

Overview of Quality Assurance for Attendance

Head Teacher



Deputy Head teacher



Directors of Learning



Tutors



Family Support Workers



Attendance Officer



The Hub



Inclusion Admin Assistant,

Appendix 2.

Attendance codes, descriptions and meanings

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (not Dual registered)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence
D	Dual Registration (attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
I	Illness (not med/dental appointments)	Authorised Absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registration closed)	Present
M	Medical / Dental appointments	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O	Unauthorised abs (not covered by other code)	Unauthorised Absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
#	School closed to pupils & staff	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not on roll	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 3.

Extended Leave During Term Time

The law states that parents are compelled to ensure that their child attends school unless there is reasonable excuse for non-attendance.

Family holidays during term time are not deemed as a reasonable excuse.

You should **not** take your child out of school for extended leave. However for **exceptional** circumstances we will consider requests. We are not in a position to stop you taking your child/children out of school. However if you do take your child/children out of school without permission we will not authorise the time lost. Unauthorised absences are liable to Penalty Notice Fines or prosecution for non-attendance.

Child/children who are absent for more than 10 days following the expected date of return may be removed from roll and there can be no guarantee of your preferred school place being available on their return.

Please fill in the following so we can consider whether your request does fulfil the criteria of “exceptional circumstances” and for safeguarding purposes so that we are aware of the reasons for potential absence. We require a minimum of 4 weeks notice for requests and aim to get back to you within 5 working days.

Name of Children	1)	2)	Contact details Name: Address during period of extended leave: Telephone number during extended leave:
Tutor Group/Class			
Address			
The exceptional circumstances I would like you to take into consideration are			
Dates of leave requested	To	From	
Signature of parent(s)/carer(s)			
Print full name			

<u>Office use only</u>		
Name of child _____	Tutor group/class _____	Current attendance _____%
<u>Agreement reached</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have agreed that this request constitutes “exceptional circumstances” and is authorised <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/> • I am unable to authorise this request <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/> 		

Appendix 4

Sanctions Available to The School to Address Poor Attendance

We have a strong ethos of working in partnership with all stakeholders, including parents, students and external agencies.

There are clear lines of support in place for any parent who is struggling to ensure that their child attends school regularly and we would urge you to contact school at the earliest opportunity to speak with the relevant Director of Learning or the Attendance Officer if this becomes the case.

It is our philosophy to support our students and our families and we understand that, for a lot of our students, moving into adulthood can bring significant issues which might impact on attendance.

However, in some circumstances, we will consider the use of Fixed Penalty Notices as outlined below:

Use of Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by the School under the following conditions;

- Unauthorised leave from school exceeding 10 sessions (5 school days) in any 5 week period;
- Parentally condoned absence;
- Unauthorised holiday in term time;
- Unauthorised delayed return from extended holidays;
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed) equivalent to 10 sessions in any five week period.

Payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 per student per parent that they live with. Payment after this time but within 28 days is £120 per student per parent that they live with.

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice within 28 days will result in the withdrawal of the Notice and will trigger a fast-track prosecution for the same offence under Section 444 Education Act 1996.