



Attendance Policy

*A passion for Learning,
A love for Life,
in a school that cares*

Feckenham C of E First School aims to work together with parents and carers in order to ensure the achievement of excellent levels of attendance and punctuality of all pupils as we recognise how attendance impacts on progress and attainment.

1 Introduction

1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2 Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carers. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note and telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

3 If a child is absent

3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or carer.

3.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.

3.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

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3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4 Requests for leave of absence

4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a week in advance of the absence.

4.2 Requests for holidays in term time **will not be** authorised by the headteacher and/or Governors unless the holiday is viewed as taking place under exceptional circumstances. If Parents/Carers are intending to take their child out of school for a planned holiday, they are required to make an appointment to meet with the headteacher to discuss the request. All appointments should be made via the school office and should be scheduled for at least 4 weeks prior to the holiday taking place.

4.3 Holiday requests that are declined are unauthorised absences and will be recorded as such. All unauthorised absences are monitored and if a child's attendance record becomes a concern, the school has a responsibility to inform the local authority, who will then consider taking legal action.

5 Long-term absence

5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

6.1 The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Education Investigation Service for Worcestershire who will advise on appropriate action to be taken.

6.2 Legal Note: Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils, including those in Reception. The school aims to work with families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or are ordered to pay a fixed penalty notice (fined) if unauthorised absences become a concern, this may include attendance issues relating to unauthorised holiday absences.

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6.3 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

7 Attendance targets

7.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on both attendance figures achieved in previous years and Government advice. Our school target is usually between 97% and 98%.

7.2 It is worth noting that if a child has 10 days absence from school in one year he or she can only achieve 95% overall attendance. This is whether the absence was through illness or a family holiday i.e. authorised or unauthorised.

8 Monitoring and review

8.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

8.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

8.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus.

8.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or carers.

9 Children Missing Education

9.1 If a pupil leaves school without our knowledge and we are unable to contact the parents or carers of that pupil, we will contact the Local Authority and inform them that a child is missing education. The Authority will then liaise with other agencies to track and locate the pupil.

10 Punctuality

10.1 The school views punctuality as very important. The first few minutes of the school day is the time when information about the school day is discussed with pupils and often the children begin working straight away, for example, guided reading or phonics groups. It can be stressful for children to arrive to school late and this could affect their progress in school.

10.2 In the case of consistent lateness, the child's parents or carers will be contacted by the headteacher so the issue can be resolved. If necessary the school may have to contact the Education Welfare Officer for further guidance and /or support.

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This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

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Date Policy Reviewed: 29th April 2014

Date Approved by Staff:

Date Approved by Governing Body: 14th May 2014

Signed by Governor:

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