



Forest Edge Federation

Governing Board

Attendance Policy

Date: Autumn 2024

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1. Aims and Objectives

At Forest Edge Federation we recognise that attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and we therefore see attendance as everybody's responsibility. We promote the benefits of good attendance by setting high expectations for every pupils and communicating these clearly to both pupils and parents/carers. We also make our schools a place pupils want to be by creating calm, orderly environments in which all pupils can thrive and learn. By working in conjunction with parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners we aim to put the right support in place at the right time and remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

This policy has been written in line with the latest Department for Education guidance:

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19th August 2024\)](#)

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 Inspection Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amended\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board will:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.

Federation staff will:

- Have a clear school attendance policy on each school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.

Senior Attendance Champions will:

- Liaise with relevant school staff when attendance issues are first identified eg DSL, SENDCO, class teacher
- Meet parents/carers at risk of persistent or severe absence to identify actions and interventions to improve attendance.
- Make referrals to services and organisations that can support parents to overcome barriers to attendance
- Have formal conversations with parents not engaging in voluntary support
- Have a strong understanding of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school.
- Monitor and evaluate progress including the effectiveness of the strategies and processes in each school
- Working with external agencies such as social care and the local authority school attendance support team to tackle persistent absence
- Provide attendance data and reports to the governing board
- Attend Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority

Senior Attendance Champions

Mr Rushton – Woolaston Primary School, 01594 529 270

Mrs Fryer – Tutshill C of E Primary School, 01291 622 593

The school attendance officer will:

- Manage and record lateness
- Identify absences that are not explained and contact parents
- Analyse attendance and absence data termly to identify pupils and cohorts that require support
- Share attendance and absence data with school attendance champions
- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance and raise concerns with attendance champion
- Benchmark school attendance data across the federation and against local, regional and national levels
- Record attendance accurately accurately and share the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Advise the Executive Headteacher when to issue fixed penalty notices

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School Attendance Officers

Mrs Wellington – Woolaston Primary School

Mrs Joubert – Tutshill C of E Primary School

Parents and carers:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

4.0 Processes for recording attendance and absence

The federation uses SIMS to register attendance and the registers are taken at the start of the morning and afternoon every day. The school offices must be informed about any pupil absence and the reasons for the absence and parents/carers will need to report the child's absence at every 48 hour period. The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure accuracy and consistency. If a pupil is absent and a parent/carer has not reported the absence the school office will call to ascertain why the child is absent and when they are likely to return.

The contact numbers and relevant staff are:

Woolaston

Mrs Wellington 01594 529279

Tutshill

Mrs Joubert 01291 622593

The school gates will open ahead of registration, **Woolaston** at 8.55am and **Tutshill** 8.35am and pupils will enter ready for the morning register to be completed. Once the school gates have closed, **Woolaston** 9.00am and **Tutshill** 8.45 am, any pupils arriving are deemed to be late and must gain entry to our schools via the office. Any late pupils will be coded as late on the register and the number of minutes late will also be recorded. Registers will be kept open for a period of 30 minutes, until 9.30am at **Woolaston** and until 9.15am at **Tutshill**. Attendance after these times will result in pupils being marked as an unauthorised absence.

5.0 Strategies for promoting attendance

Weekly celebration of attendance in assemblies and awards for the best class
Reminders about the importance of good punctuality and attendance on the weekly newsletters.

Rewarding good attendance at the end of each term with stickers and certificates

6.0 Planned absence

We encourage parents/carers to make appointments outside school hours when possible but we recognise that this isn't always the case. If a pupil has a planned appointment parents/carers are required to notify the school offices in advance of the appointment. These appointments will then be appropriately coded on the register and will be counted as authorised absences.

7.0 Leave of Absence Requests

Parents/carers must make term time leave requests to the Executive Headteacher using forms available in our school offices and any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. The Executive Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

We define 'exception circumstance' as absence due to an unavoidable reason. Term time holidays will not be authorised and if a holiday exceeds the absence threshold 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 weeks then a penalty notice may be issued. (please see below for more information on penalty notices).

8.0 Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents if their child's attendance levels falls below the expected level
- Monitor attendance and absence data across the federation and at an individual level where there are specific concerns/intervention (daily for any children with safeguarding concerns; weekly for classes; termly and annual analysis with comparisons to national data.
- Identify any particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern (ie closer monitoring of SEND and pupil premium children as national data trends show that attendance for these groups tends to be below non-SEND and non-pupil premium children.)
- Collect attendance data each term and publish at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases.
- Compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.
- 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

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders (eg pupil premium leads, SENCo), 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

9.0 Working with Parents to Improve Attendance

When pupil attendance falls below 94% informal contact via a phone call or email will be made with parents/carers to discuss why attendance has fallen to this level and what steps can be made to improve attendance.

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes a concern (below 90%) we will meet with pupils and parents to address any in-school barriers to attendance and where necessary we will make referrals to outside agencies for support. If absence continues to be a concern after this intervention then the federation senior attendance champions will lead more formal meetings with parents/carers possibly supported by a representative from the local authority School Attendance Support Team.

If this voluntary support does not been effective or parents/carers have not engaged then formal support will be put in place in the form of an attendance contract or education supervision order. Notices to improve and penalty notices may also be issued at this stage. It may also be necessary to intensify support through statutory children's care involvement especially if absence falls below 50%.

Where all support routes have failed to secure improvements in attendance then parents/carers may be prosecuted. The decision to prosecute rests solely with the local authority.

(see flow chart of actions in Appendix 1)

10.0 Notices to Improve

A notice to Improve is a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. Notices to improve are issued when the unauthorised absence threshold has been met for example persistent unauthorised absences.

11.0 Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure their child or children regularly attend school and can be issued without a prior notice to improve.

Penalty notices may be issued if pupils reach the 10 session (5 school days) threshold of unauthorised absence in any 10 week rolling period. These unauthorised absences could be related to a holiday or could be accumulated as combination of unauthorised absences such as holiday plus arriving late after registers close. The sessions don't have to be consecutive and can span different

terms and schools years eg 2 sessions in summer term followed by a further 8 sessions in the autumn term.

Penalty notices may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification for the first 5 days of a suspension or permanent exclusion.

Penalty notices can be issued to each parent who has allowed the absence and these penalty notices are charged at £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days increasing to £160 if paid within 28 days.

Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child in any 3 year rolling period. If a 2nd penalty notice is it charged at £160 if paid within 28 days.

12.0 Pupils Requiring Additional Support

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and attending school provides the best opportunity for needs to be identified and for support to be put in place. For those pupils absent from school due to mental or physical health or their special education needs and/or disabilities additional support will be put in place. The most effective support will be identified as a result of working with the family to understand the needs of the pupil and family and providing any pastoral support needed to help improve attendance.

If we have reason to believe that a pupil will miss 15 or more consecutive days of school or the total number of days missed due to illness is 15 or more we will make a sickness return to the local authority.

For pupils with special educational needs and disabilities we will work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure any provision outlined in the pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is accessed and make reasonable adjustments to support attendance.

13.0 Equality / Inclusion

The school recognises that it has to make special efforts to ensure that all groups prosper regardless of their sex or gender, age, sexual orientation, marital or parental status or other family circumstance, race, ethnic or national origin, colour, creed, disability, it includes those with special educational needs; those who have difficulties accessing the school or services; those who speak English as an additional language; those who have frequent moves and lack stability leading to time out of school (e.g. children in care); those who as children are caring for others; who come from homes with low income and/or inadequate home study space; those who experience bullying, harassment or social exclusion; those with low parental support or different parent expectations; those with emotional, mental and physical wellbeing needs; those who exhibit challenging behaviour and those who come from ethnic minority groups including travellers, refugees and asylum seekers.

Links to other policies

This policy is linked to the following policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- RSE Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Race Equality Policy

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually, by the Executive Headteacher. The Governing Body will be asked to approve the policy each time it is reviewed/updated.

Document reviewed by Teaching & Learning Committee

Name: (Governor)

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 1 – Flow Chart of Actions

