



Ensuring Excellent Attendance Policy

July 2024

Vision Statement:

Being Different; Belonging Together.

Frances Olive Anderson Church of England Primary School is a place where all are welcomed and considered valuable and valued as unique children of God. As a school community we aim for all to develop wisdom, hope for the future and a sense of self-worth - to aspire to be the very best we can be, and to enable us to serve others.

We have a strong and dedicated team who endeavour to provide an exciting and enriched curriculum from which we can all learn. The academic and emotional needs of our community are considered, to enable everyone to flourish. Happy learners are lifelong and successful learners.

We strive for our children and adults to be resilient to face any challenges and become a voice for change in the world where change is needed.

"All of us are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 12:27)

New guidance released by the government for August 2024 onwards.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Policy Approved on : 11.07.24

Policy Review Date : July 2027

School Attendance Champion: Mrs Sarah Woolley (Headteacher)

Contact details for reporting an absence: Miss S Smith / Mrs G Watson 01427 612827

1. Introduction:

The school believes that excellent attendance at school is imperative to making good progress. For children to gain the greatest benefit from school they need to be **in school, on time, every day** unless their reason for absence is unavoidable. **Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be treated as a safeguarding matter.**

2. Aims of the Policy:



- To improve the overall percentage attendance of pupils at Frances Olive Anderson C of E Primary School.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the School including Pupils, Parents, Teachers and Governors.
- To outline our systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data.
- To further develop positive and consistent **relationships** between home and school.

3. Understanding Absence:

Every half day absence from school (morning and afternoon) has to be classified by the school (not parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why we need to know if children are ever off ill.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like genuine illness or medical appointments which cannot take place outside of school time.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school do not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. Examples of unauthorised absences include:

- Children who have been kept off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Children who arrive too late at school to get their register mark
- Holidays, shopping trips, day trips, birthdays.

4. Absence Procedures:

If your child is ill you must call the school on the first day of absence before 8.45 am by calling 01427 612827.

If a child is absent from school for any reason, it is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to report this to the school by 8.45am.

Frances Olive Anderson C of E Primary School operates a first day contact system, which means if your child is absent from school and we have not heard from you, we will contact you by Parent Hub to ask for an explanation for their absence. If we do not receive communication from you, this will be followed up by a telephone call. If we cannot contact you on the first contact you have given we will contact the other people on your contact list. We may visit your home or contact the police to do a safe and well check if we are worried. For safeguarding reasons, if a pupil is absent for more than 1 day, Parents/Guardians are required to make contact **every** day for the duration of their absence.

We are only able to authorise 3 days of illness without medical evidence. If your child is still absent after this 3 day period, then their absence will be marked as unauthorised unless you are able to provide medical evidence, such as a photograph of prescribed medication clearly showing the pupil's name and the date it was prescribed, or a hospital/doctors note or confirmation of a doctor's appointment etc. Please note that this is a change to our policy from September 2024.

The following link contains further clarification on when a child should be absent from school due to illness:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>



5. Registers:

There is a legal requirement to complete registers at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Information from the registers is placed onto our school information management system (SIMS) and monitored by a senior member of staff.

6. Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and has an impact on the child who is late and the other children in the class. The school gates open at 8.45 and children are expected to be ready for school by 8.55am. Registers are taken at 8.55 and if your child is not in class then they will receive a late mark. At 9.20 registers are closed. In accordance with regulations, if your child arrives after this time your child will get a mark that shows them as late but on site. Children arriving late must enter through the main reception area.

7. Managing Lateness:

If your child is persistently late you will be asked to meet with a senior member of staff to discuss the problem and to see what support we can offer you to rectify the situation. Regular lateness will be referred to the Inclusion and Team at Lincolnshire County Council (LCC).

8. Approved Absence / Holiday In Term Time:

The school, in line with Government legislation, will never authorise absence in term time unless the circumstances are **exceptional**. It is not possible to list all of those occasions that we would consider exceptional but they may include:

- Military personnel returning from active duty
- Bereavement
- Family Weddings
- Restrictions due to employment – this will need written evidence from the employer that they are not able to sanction a holiday outside of school terms. It is expected that consideration will be given to the possibility of taking a family holiday in any of the holiday dates set by the school.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) gives the Local Authority and School the power to issue fixed penalty fines for unauthorised holidays in term time. No parent can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a holiday as a right.

As from September 2012 the amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulation's 2006 make clear that head teachers should not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances. This will be rigorously applied throughout the school. In the event of a holiday not being authorised a letter will be sent to both parents stating this (See appendix 2.) All unauthorised holidays/absences will be reported to the LCC Inclusion and Attendance team who may issue a fixed penalty. Where relevant, individual fines would apply to both parents. Parents should not book or make arrangement for holidays unless exceptional circumstances have been agreed with the school in advance.



At the beginning of each academic year we will send out a “warning letter” to all families to ensure they know that leave of absence for holidays won't be granted. This then allows us to follow up parents who take their children on holiday without applying for a leave of absence.

9. Applying For A Leave Of Absence

To apply for a leave of absence the parent or carer must submit a leave of absence form (Appendix 1) before the absence which will outline why the request is exceptional. A meeting will be held with a senior member of staff to discuss the request if necessary. **Only in truly exceptional circumstances will a leave of absence be granted.**

- Work will not be provided for pupils to complete during an absence.

10. Encouraging Good Attendance.

We encourage good attendance in the following ways. This was paused during Covid but will start again in September 2023.

- High profile in school – published on weekly ‘snippets’ and the school website
- Weekly celebration and presentation of a certificate to any class with 100% attendance
- Termly certificates for pupils achieving 100% attendance
- Special certificate at the end of each year for children with 100% attendance
- A prize for all children at the end of each year with 97%+ attendance.

11. School Monitoring

On a half termly basis the school monitors:

- % overall attendance by class, year group and pupil.
- % attendance of different groups of learners (Boys, Girls, SEND, Pupil Premium)
- Children below 90% attendance
- Children regularly arriving late

12. Communication with Parents.

Each term parents will receive an attendance letter which will be Red, Blue, Bronze, Silver or Gold to inform them of their child's attendance.

Red Letter	Below	90%
Blue Letter	Between	90-94.9%
Bronze Letter	Between	95-97.9%
Silver Letter	Between	98 – 99.9%
Gold Letter	Achieved	100%

Children's yearly attendance will be included in their end of year report.

If a child's attendance is between 90 and 94% this is classed as ‘at risk’ of persistent absenteeism. Following monitoring if there is still a concern, parents/carers will be invited to an informal meeting to discuss support required.



13. Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A child becomes a "persistent absentee" when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. **Absence at this level will do considerable harm to a child's education prospects** and we require full parental support and co-operation to tackle this.

Attendance panels will be held every half term. Parents of children with poor or deteriorating attendance will be invited to an attendance panel which will include a senior member of staff and possibly a representative from the Inclusion and Attendance team at LCC.

All PA cases are monitored closely by a senior member of staff and managed through our improving attendance procedures.

14. Attendance Panels

Where issues in attendance are identified, parents or carers will be invited to a 1-2-1 meeting with a senior member of staff and possibly a representative of the Inclusion and Attendance team to understand the problems, create an action plan and agree a target for improvement.

15. Inclusion and Attendance Team

A LCC Inclusion and Attendance team worker will work at School on request and can be contacted at any time in an emergency. Under the Education Act (1993) the Local Authority has the duty to bring prosecutions in the magistrate court against the parents of children with poor school attendance and under the child act (1989) to seek Education Supervision orders against parents whose children's attendance is unsatisfactory.

16. Penalty Notices and Legal Action

Please note these are changes from August 2024.

Penalty Notices can be issued by the **Local Authority** for poor attendance and for Term Time Leave.

The cost of a penalty Notice is £160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days. This is reduced to £80 per parent if paid within 21 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued within a 3 year period, either for poor attendance or Term Time Leave, the cost is £160 per parent per child to be paid within 28 days. The cost will NOT be reduced for the second offence.

A maximum of two penalty notices will be issued per parent, per child within a 3 year rolling period. If a third offence is committed then the Local Authority will pursue alternative legal interventions. This could include and Educational Supervision Order or prosecution via the Magistrates Court.

Magistrates Court fines can be up to £2500 per parent per child, and if found guilty can show on a parents future DBS certificate due to failure to safeguard a child's education.



The payment must be paid directly to the local authority regardless of who issued the penalty notice. The school does not receive any money from fines.

Please see **appendix 3**

17. Governance

The Headteacher will report attendance data at each full governors meeting in the Head Teachers report to the Governing Body.

On a regular basis the representatives of the Governing Body will:

- Review attendance figures
- Ensure that holiday requests are only being authorised in exceptional circumstances
- Ensure the attendance policy is being applied robustly and fairly.

This policy is to be reviewed every three years or sooner if guidance changes.



Appendix 1

Application for Exceptional Pupils Leave of Absence

Office Use
%
%
%

Name of Pupil: _____ Class: _____

Name of Pupil: _____ Class: _____

Name of Pupil: _____ Class: _____

I wish to apply for leave of absence for my child(ren) from:

First day of Absence: _____ Date expected back at school: _____

Total number of days your child(ren) will be absent from school: _____

Please outline the **exceptional** nature of your request:

Best time to discuss this application with senior member of staff: _____

Signed: _____ Parent/Guardian

This form must be forwarded to the Head teacher before the requested period of absence.

Leave of absence without authorisation will be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance team at Lincolnshire County Council

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Leave of absence is exceptional and has been granted:

Leave has not been granted:

Reason that makes this request exceptional is:

Signature of Head teacher: _____

Date:



Appendix 2
Refusal for leave of absence
To be copied onto school letterhead

Date

Dear Mr & Mrs
Address

Child's name / DOB

Thank you for your application for exceptional pupil's leave of absence from _____ to _____ (how many days off school?). This has been considered carefully with reference to our Ensuring Excellent Attendance Policy (January 2020) which can be found on our school website.

I have now had the opportunity to consider your request, and have decided that unfortunately, this family holiday is not considered an exceptional circumstance and cannot be authorised.

If <<firstname>> should take the proposed time off for a holiday, <<his/her>> absences will be marked as unauthorised and you will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. A Fixed Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools/academies to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children at their school/academy under the following legislation:

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child received efficient full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.
- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of either £60.00 or £120.00.

Please don't hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Woolley

Headteacher



Appendix 3

PENALTY NOTICE FINES FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS CHANGING

FIRST OFFENCE

1

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days
Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

2

SECOND OFFENCE (WITHIN 3 YEARS)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days. No reduced rate will be offered.

The following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after **19th August 2024**.

3

THIRD OFFENCE AND ANY FURTHER OFFENCES (WITHIN 3 YEARS)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on a Parents future DBS certificate, due to failure to safeguard a child's education'.

10 SESSIONS (5 DAYS) OF UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE IN A 10-WEEK PERIOD

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.