

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Fletewood School, with due regard to safeguarding duties, is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance at the school. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if children attend school regularly and punctually, they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

This Attendance Policy is intended to provide an agreed framework within which consistent practises and procedures can be applied.

It is expected that parents, pupils, teachers, the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body will work together in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

We have set a target of 100% attendance for each of our pupils but appreciate that this is not always achievable. However, anything below 96% will be monitored. The government defines persistent absence as anything below 90% attendance. This will mean that more stringent measures will need to be taken. These measures are detailed later in the policy.

As a guide, it is useful to know that missing more than 7.2 days of school in an academic year would put a child below the 96% attendance rate. Lateness also impacts on a child's education. Being late by 10 minutes every day for the full academic year would equate to missing 4.8 days of school. This doesn't only impact the child who is late, but also their peers when interruptions and disruptions occur in class due to the lateness.

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

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.

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body

The governing body 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 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
- Initiating requesting of issuing fixed-penalty notices through the Local Authority, where necessary
- Working with education welfare offices to tackle persistent absence

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 twice daily.

School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Make enquiries about absences by 10am each day a child is absent without notification

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time (doors open at 8:30am and close for registration at 9am)
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:30am on the day of the absence and 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

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Recording Attendance

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

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 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9:10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1:10pm.

Unplanned absence

If your child is not going to be in school, please call the office to report their absence.
Please do this before 9:30am each day.

If we have not heard from you, we will follow the process below:

- 1) At **9:30am** we will send you a text message.
- 2) If we have not heard from you by **10am**, we will start to **call all** of the contact numbers that you have provided to gain an explanation for the absence.
- 3) If we have still not been able to find out where your child is, then we (school) will make a home visit at about **11am**.
- 4) If we still haven't been able to get a response, we will report it to the police as your child will then be classed as a 'missing child'. We will then ask them to do a '**safe and well check**' by visiting your home.

This procedure is to ensure that we know where your child is and that you are all safe.

If your child's attendance starts to fall, Mrs Gray will be in touch to see how we can support you and your child. If your child's attendance falls to 90% or below, Mrs Gray will be required to complete an attendance profile on your child and will arrange to meet with you. We will also ask that you attend an attendance panel or ask you to provide medical evidence when your child has been absent.

To support your child's attendance, please:

- Contact us each day your child is absent from school
- Let us know if your child is unsettled so that we can help
- Do not take holidays in term time.

We will mark absences due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. 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 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.

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. A staff member or the school office should be notified of the details of the appointment so it can be recorded accurately during registration. This can be done in writing via text to the school mobile or via email.

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 apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

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

Persistent lateness will be addressed by the headteacher, and parents will be supported to ensure their child arrives to school on time each day. For example:

- Allowing parents to send their child to school with their breakfast so they have time to eat in the morning – wrap-around care is available from 8am
- Supporting parents to network with other parents who may be able to offer lifts on occasion
- In extreme cases, at the discretion of the headteacher, arrangements may be made to collect a child.

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 take further measures, e.g. contacting The Gateway, or, in extreme circumstances, contacting the police.
- 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

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via our termly written reports. Where appropriate, any issues will be addressed during termly parents' evenings, although persistent lateness or absences will be addressed much sooner by

the class teacher in the first instance and then the headteacher should it be deemed necessary to do so.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

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.

'Exceptional circumstances' include a family bereavement, a wedding of an immediate family member, or taking part in a religious event. All these would be considered acceptable for short absences. Birthdays are not considered to be an acceptable reason for absence so will be unauthorised. The headteacher will consider each application individually, taking into account the facts, circumstances and context. A child's record of attendance will also be considered, and approval may not be given if the request takes the child's attendance below 96% for the academic year.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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
- Wedding of an *immediate* family member (e.g. parent, older sibling, etc)

Strategies for promoting attendance

There are a number of ways the school promotes good attendance:

- Children can earn house points for arriving to school before registration.
- Certificates are given each term for 100% attendance
- A gold level certificate can be achieved for 100% attendance in a full academic year along with a 100% attendance pin

Attendance monitoring

Fletewood School uses the management system, Scholarpack, to record attendance through daily registration. This system provides instant data on an individual's and a cohort's attendance for analysis. Each teacher can track the attendance of their class so they can address concerns early with parents through discussions, one-to-one meetings, or a more formal meeting with the headteacher present.

The school will:

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

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 their pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and the Senior Leadership Team 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

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 parent 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

The school will continue to target unauthorised absences through meetings, letters (see appendix A), and closer monitoring where necessary. A home/school contract between parents, pupils and staff will be drawn up if absences persist (see Appendix B). Appendix C shows the Local Authority's procedures for Attendance.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Policy date: March 2023

Policy review date: March 2025

Appendix A

Dear Parent/Carer of [first name] [surname],

I am writing to you to reinforce the importance of regular and consistent school attendance for [first name]. As you know, having chosen Fletewood School for your child, a good education gives your child the best possible start in life. It helps young people obtain secure employment and develop into mature and responsible citizens.

As a school, we are aiming for a minimum attendance of 96%, with outstanding attendance being 100%. Anything below 94% is considered weak, under 90% is poor, and if attendance falls below 85%, we will have serious concerns.

Your child's teacher will have already alerted you that their attendance is below the 96% required and it is important that this improves immediately. Currently your child's attendance rate is **xx percentage** since the beginning of the academic year. This is made up of **xx absences out of xx possible sessions, xx of which are unauthorised absences**. We will be monitoring your child's attendance closely in the weeks to come and if this does not show clear signs of improvement, I may have to ask you to come into school to discuss strategies to improve your child's attendance. Please make an appointment to see me in the meantime if you would like additional support.

Kind regards,

Mrs R Gray
Headteacher

Overall Attendance Percentage: **xx%**
Overall Authorised Absence Percentage: **xx%**
Overall Unauthorised Absence Percentage: **xx%**

Appendix B

Fletewood School

Attendance Contract Template

Date/Time of Meeting:	
Venue:	

Pupil Name:	
Date of Birth:	
Address:	

Present at meeting:	
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Action agreed
EXAMPLES OF ACTION AGREED: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupil will arrive at school by 9am every day.• Parent will inform the school on the first day of a sickness absence and provide a note upon pupil's return.• Parent will provide medical evidence for every sickness absence pupil may incur.• Are any issues preventing pupil from attending regularly (school staff will be informed)?

Attendance target:	96%
Timescale for improvement	

Date for review meeting:	
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I confirm that this Attendance Action Plan was agreed by all present.

Signed:

_____ Parent/carer

_____ Pupil

_____ Headteacher

_____ Other Agency (if applicable)