

# Fosse Primary School

## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

This is a successful school and you and your child play your part in making it so. We aim to create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. As a school we will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to support regular school attendance. This school attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

It is very important that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence (including lateness) affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility; failing to ensure your child's regular attendance and permitting their absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecution.

### Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility; parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

### To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you information on attendance in newsletters and on the school website;
- Meet with you at least twice a year to discuss how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality is, and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Run promotional events when parents/carers, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

## Understanding types of absence:

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either **authorised or unauthorised**. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings and/or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (ie condoned absence)
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- absences linked to shopping, looking after other children, birthdays
- trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be addressed by the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

*Appendix 1 shows the codes used to record attendance on our attendance registers.*

## Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their sessions over the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' full support and co-operation to tackle this.

**If a child has less than 100% and there is any unauthorised absence, the position is that the child could have attended more regularly, and this will be a concern.**

We monitor all pupil absence closely and where the school has concerns about your child's attendance, we will be in touch with you about this.

PA pupils are identified and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All our PA pupils are subject to an action plan. The plan may include: *allocation of additional support through our pastoral leader or Family Support Worker, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance*. All children who fall into the PA category are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

## **Absence Procedures:**

### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, to talk to a member of staff;
- Please note that letters or notes that you send us will be stored in your child's file.

### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence (*and on subsequent days*) if we have not heard from you;
- Write to you if we are concerned about your child's attendance to alert you to a concerning emerging pattern or level of absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer, Pastoral Lead, Family Support Worker or Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the EWO if attendance is a concern.
- In some circumstances, if your child is absent from school and has not been seen, we will arrange for a visit to your home to be undertaken to establish that your child is safe. This visit could be undertaken by a Police Officer.

*Appendix 2 shows the form we ask parents to complete to explain a child's absence.*

## **Telephone Numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number; if we don't have your contact number, something important may be missed. *There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year. In addition to holding a contact number for parents, we ask for two additional numbers in case of an emergency. Please provide these to the school office.*

## **The Education Welfare Officer:**

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the EWO from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement with parents/carers. However, if attempts to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court.

Full details of the options to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. (Please note that Penalty Notices may be issued by the Local Authority immediately following a period of holiday-related leave that has not been authorised by the school, alternatively, court action may be taken)

Parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority on 0116 454 5510. They can also be reached by e-mailing [education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk).

### **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and they do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Pupils arriving late disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and this in itself can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at 8.45 and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 9.00 am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

The registers will be closed at 9.30am. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice or be prosecuted if the problem persists.

If your child is regularly late, you will be asked to meet with the Pastoral Lead, Headteacher and/or Family Support Worker to resolve the problem. You can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We operate a 'Walking Bus' which helps in getting children to school early for breakfast club, ready for the day.

### **Holidays in Term Time:**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help their child by not taking children away in term time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is **no automatic entitlement** in law to time off in school time to go on holiday or other trips.

All applications for leave must be made in advance. Parents are required to comply with the school's procedure for requesting leave of absence for their child. In accordance with the law, agreement will only be given where the Head teacher considers the reason for the request to be exceptional in nature.

*Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school office.* It is important that all parents/carers are aware that requests for leave should be made prior to making any bookings.

Also, that the decision made by the Head teacher will be confirmed in writing and without this written confirmation, it cannot be taken that there is agreement to authorise the absence. Any period of leave taken without the written agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised.

*If your child has unauthorised leave of absence you may either be issued with a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child (discounted to £60 if paid within 21 days), or, your case could be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court.*

Should a Penalty Notice be issued, failure to pay by the 28<sup>th</sup> day will usually mean that the Local Authority proceeds to the Magistrates' Court in relation to the failure to ensure regular attendance.

*Appendix 3 shows the schools leave of absence application form.*

### **School targets:**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The Attendance target for the school for 2019-20 is 96%.

Throughout the school year, we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our regular newsletter.

If you would like a copy of your child's attendance record at any point, please ask **at the school office**.

### **Security of registers**

By law, registers must be kept for at least 3 years. Registers are stored within the school's 'SIMS' information management system.

### **People responsible for attendance matters at this school are:**

Lynn Hatton, Attendance Officer  
Richard Stone, Head teacher  
Mel Lockton, Pastoral Lead  
Edwina Osbourne, Family Support Worker  
Kam Kaur, Education Welfare Officer

**Date of Policy:**  
**August 29<sup>th</sup> 2019**

**To be reviewed annually**

## Parental Agreement

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I have read and understood Fosse Primary School's Attendance Policy, August 2019.

Parent/s'/Carer's Name/s:

Signed:

Child's Name:

Class:

## Appendix 1

### The registration system

The school uses a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. The following national codes are used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	<i>Not counted in possible attendances</i>
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	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
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	school closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

**Appendix 2**

**Absence Information Request**

**Dear Parent or Carer**

Re: \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

It has come to our attention that your child was absent from school on the following days.

Monday \_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday \_\_\_\_\_

Wednesday \_\_\_\_\_ Thursday \_\_\_\_\_

Friday \_\_\_\_\_

We do not as yet have an explanation for this absence, therefore it has been recorded as unauthorised.

Please accept our sincere apologies if you have already called the school and left a message.

Please fill in the reply slip below and return to the school office as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

Richard Stone  
Head Teacher

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My child \_\_\_\_\_ was absent on \_\_\_\_\_

Due to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I called the school and left a message on: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 3

**Fosse Primary School - Application form for pupil's leave of absence**

**Please read the information overleaf before completing this form**

For your request to be considered, the form must be completed and returned to the school at least two weeks before you plan to leave. Please complete all sections of the form. A letter will be sent to you when the Head teacher has considered the application to let you know if the absence has been authorised.

**Please do not book any flight tickets etc until you have received confirmation from school that leave has been authorised.**

Name of student:	Class:
First day of absence:	Date of return to school:
Date of Request/Form Submitted to School:	

I request authorised absence for my above son/daughter for the following reason/s:

.....  
.....

Full Destination Address: .....

Date you plan to travel: ..... Date you plan to return: .....  
**(Please note the application will not be considered without all the above information).**

We request details of a friend or relative to be a point of contact. If you do travel, the person will notify us of any changes to your circumstances which may affect the date of your return. We may have to contact them in the event of your child not returning as expected:

Name of contact: ..... Address: .....  
Telephone number: ..... Mobile: .....

Please provide names of any other children in your family and the school they attend:

.....

**I confirm I understand the information above and the guidelines (see over).**

Signed: ..... parent/carer Print name: .....

Parent/carer's address: .....

..... Date: .....

***School to complete:***

Date form received: \_\_\_\_\_ Decision: \_\_\_\_\_

How has parent been informed? \_\_\_\_\_ Date informed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of staff member who informed parent: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Applications for leave of absence Guidelines**

Fosse Primary School is very reluctant for a pupil to miss any part of his/her education.

1. In line with the Government guidance, the school management and its governors are unable to authorise any term time absence, unless our view is that there are **exceptional circumstances**.
2. If permission is granted, photocopies of airline or travel tickets **showing date of booking** will be required by the school office **before** you travel. If your request has been agreed, failure to provide this information will mean that the request is no longer agreed and your child's absence will be classed as unauthorised.
3. We may also request copies of other travel related documents from you. We will advise you if this is the case. Where we do not receive copies of documents requested, this is likely to mean that we will not authorise some or all of any absence your child has in relation to this request.
4. If permission is granted, pupils must ensure that they are up to date with their school work before they leave and in addition, it will be parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure that their child makes up any missed work in his/her **own time** upon return.
5. **The decision made by the school is final.**

### **Please note**

**If your child has unauthorised leave of absence you will either be issued with a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child (discounted to £60 if paid within 21days), or, your case will be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court.**