Folksworth Church of England (VC) Primary School

Attendance Policy

Formulated in conjunction with A1 Partnership Schools

Date: October 2018
Review date: October 2019

Folksworth C of E (VC) Primary SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY
- formulated in conjunction with A1 Partnership Schools

The Governing Body is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment.

Aims

- To emphasise the importance of, and secure from pupils, maximum attendance at school to enable them to take full advantage of their educational opportunities;
- To make explicit to all relevant parties the school's expectations on attendance levels;
- To promote a consistent approach across the A1 Partnerships schools all matters relating to attendance;
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance;
- To communicate to all relevant parties (teachers, parents, pupils) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised";
- To emphasise the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

Introduction

Regular attendance at school is vital. Without it the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory; put simply: absence means missed learning. It is also a legal requirement that pupils of compulsory school age receive full-time education and this, with the exception of those educated at home or elsewhere, means regular attendance at school. Irregular attendance leads to pupils missing important lessons and therefore not fulfilling their true potential; it also places children at risk and may result in their being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. ***Therefore we expect attendance at school to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.***

Attendance is a national priority and, like all schools, Folksworth C of E Primary has to submit data electronically (both in an aggregated form and on an individual pupil basis) every term. It is a key indicator of an effective school and, as such, will be scrutinised by OFSTED. National data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance and progress.

The National Perspective

The Department for Education states that 'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less'.

100% - 99%	**Excellent** - Well done! This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and support a positive work ethic.
98%-96%	**Good -** well done strive to build on this
95% -91%	**Becoming unsatisfactory** - Please work with the school urgently to improve the situation.
90%-86%	**Poor** - absence is causing concern.
Below 85%	**Unacceptable** - absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It IS affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. We will work with you and the Education Welfare Officer to improve your child's attendance. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can 'authorise' absence. The school will not assess all reasons as 'valid'.

The government expects schools to:

- promote good attendance and reduce absence , including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to a full time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

The government expect parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school attend regularly and for all pupils to be punctual.

Authorised Absences

Authorised absences include those where**:**

(i) A child is ill or receiving medical attention;

(ii) The day is set aside for religious observance - notified in advance;

(iii) Absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness);

(iv) Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances – agreed by the Headteacher which will be logged (see appendix 7);

(v) Approved Sporting Activity.

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum: routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged **out of school hours wherever possible.**

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences are those where:

- no explanation is provided by parent (s)/carers by 9.30am on the day of the absence;
- an explanation is received before 9.30am on the day of the absence but does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.

The following activities are examples of what would be classified as **unauthorised:**

- holiday
- minding the house;
- caring for relatives;
- awaiting repair people;
- shopping;
- a birthday or family celebration.

There are clearly some grey areas. The guidance from the County Council and the Department for Education makes it clear that only **exceptional** occasions should be classified as authorised.

We ask parents to **notify the school in advance** (preferably 4 weeks notice) of any proposed special occasion to ascertain whether the school would view the reason for absence as valid or not. Individual cases will need to be judged on their merits and fine judgements will have, on occasions, to be made.

Homework in the form of missed lessons will not be provided for unauthorised absence.

The Government guidelines make it plain that, in the final analysis, it is the **school** that judges whether an absence is authorised or not.

Leave of Absence

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where this is the case, head teachers should determine the number of school days a child is granted leave.

Parents should complete an ‘Absence from School Request form’ to apply for leave (see appendix 7). Where leave is not granted Penalty Notices may be issued for unauthorised holidays.

Home/School Partnership

Securing a high level of attendance requires the school and home to work closely together. To this end, we ask parents to:

(i) Do all they can to ensure their child arrives **on time**. The school day begins at 8.50 am. **Parents can be prosecuted if their child persistently arrives late.** We will monitor persistent late comers and action may be taken**.**

(ii) Notify the school on the first day if their child is unwell with details of the illness and an estimation of the likely length of absence;

(iii Get in touch at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's motivation to attend school. Do not keep children off school while any issue is being resolved.

In return the school will:

(i) Contact home on day 1 of absence if no explanation has been received from home;

(ii) Contact home over any unexplained absences;

(iii) Follow up promptly any concerns that parents pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing in, school;

(iv) Involve the Inclusion Team, Class Teacher and Teaching Assistants (where applicable) to help pupils re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances;

(v) Regularly and consistently remind pupils of the importance of good attendance and punctuality through whole school assemblies;

(vi) Reward good or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.

The Education Welfare Service

The school is responsible for providing early intervention support regarding attendance. If attendance fails to improve then a referral into the Local Authority is made for either a Penalty Notice to be issued or for PACE to be carried out. The Education Welfare Officer will support with PACE interviews.

Rewards for Good Attendance

To promote good attendance and to emphasise its importance the school monitors attendance on a weekly basis. The year group with the highest attendance figures are rewarded with Buttons (a cuddly toy) who spends the week in their classroom.

The Process of Recording & Monitoring Absences

- Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Where the reason for an absence has not been provided, the absence will be recorded as 'N'.
- The school expects parents and carers to contact the school by 9.30am on the first day of absence to account for their child's absence; this does not need to be supported by a letter. Such calls will be recorded on the school management system (Sims). Where an absence has not been explained by 9.30am the absence will be recorded as N until there is a reason confirmed.
- If the parent does not make contact with the school the school office will contact parents to determine the reason for the absence and to be satisfied the child is accounted for; although the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- A report will be provided to the Headteacher every month highlighting where attendance has fallen below 90% or where there has been a pattern of absence or continuous lateness.
- Where attendance or punctuality is established as a concern the Headteacher will send a letter and discuss the situation with the Education Welfare Officer.
- 'Absence from School Request Forms' for exceptional circumstances will be considered by the headteacher in line with this policy. Where appropriate, an interview arranged, more information requested or the form returned advising parents of her decision.

- Where a child is transferring to another school, their attendance record will be shared with new school and they are expected to attend up until they are on roll at a new school.
- The Headteacher will report attendance regularly to the governing body and provide an annual summary, in the Summer Term Head teachers report.

Registration Procedures

Each day classroom doors open at 8:45am and close at 8:55am. Pupils should enter the school and come into the classroom during this time window.

Procedure for Registering

The class teacher will take the register between 8.55 and 9:05 am.. A child arriving after the gate has shut but before 9.10 am should come into school through the main entrance. They will be marked as late- L.

The registers close at 9.10 a.m. and any children who arrive after this time will be marked as absent for that session, either with a **'U'** if they arrive in school after this time or with an **'N'** if they do not arrive at all. Expected absences would show as the appropriate code on the electronic register.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of any child, including a child who is subject to a child protection plan, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. As a result, the school will make swift arrangements to contact the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

The afternoon register is taken as soon as possible after lunch and any unexpected absences will be investigated by the school office.

Procedure for School Office

Parents are expected to email or telephone the school by 9.30am on the morning of the day of absence to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason. These absences are recorded on the school management system (Sims).

By 9:10 a.m. the registers should be completed to enable the assigned member of the admin team to check if any parents should be called to establish reasons for absence.

When established, the reasons provided for any absence will be recorded on the MIS. Any 'N' codes will be updated to show the appropriate code for the absence.

The most common codes (other than the late codes referred to above) are:

- C (Circumstances)
- G (Unauthorised Holiday)
- I (Illness/ recuperation from an operation)
- M (Medical/dental appointment)
- O(Unauthorised absence)
- V (School trip / visit)
- Y (Forced and Partial Closure – school office only)
- # (schools closed to pupils – school office only)

The electronic registers remain accessible via the management information system for the duration of the child's time at Folksworth Primary School. The diaries are kept for two years and letters explaining absence filed in the child's school file.

Late Arrival

All children who arrive at school after the gate has closed (8.55 a.m.) must report to the front office and sign in the late arrivals book. If the child arrives before 9.10 am the child will be marked as L.

After 9.10 am if the late arrival is not backed up with a satisfactory explanation, the child will be marked as an unauthorised late '**U'.** If the explanation describes a situation beyond the parent's control the school might consider the application of a 'L' mark**.**

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian during normal school hours are signed in or out from the school office. The signing in/out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency drill and as a record of arrival/absence.

General

Registers are legal documents. It is essential that school staff consistently apply the procedures outlined in this policy together with the codes for registration and that the correct codes are used to record absences from school.

Registers are checked by the Education Welfare Officer to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and frequency of any absences below 90%.

The distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence should also be clear and consistent.

In the case of an emergency evacuation, an assigned member of staff from the school office will bring with the registers and the 'late' register to the evacuation point to account for any absent children. (see Evacuation Procedure).

Any issues surrounding attendance/punctuality should be discussed with the parents/carers at one or both of the parent teacher consultations. In particular parents should be notified if attendance is below 85% or a pattern of frequent late arrival is emerging.

Parents' Responsibilities

Children should be ready to enter the classroom at 8.50 a.m. and should wait with their parents in the playground until the doors open but they should not access the school site before 8.40 a.m. unless they have prior permission to do so.

Parents/Carers should make the school office aware of any reason for a child's late arrival (i.e. if they are likely to arrive after 8.50 a.m.) or absence as soon as possible but no later than 9.30a.m.

Appendix 1

Folksworth C of E (VC) Primary School

Apreece Road, Folksworth, Peterborough, PE7 3TY

Headteacher: Miss Michelle Norbury

Telephone: 01733 240562

Email: office@folksworth.cambs.sch.uk

Website: https://folksworth.eschools.co.uk

Date

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are now required to review pupil attendance more frequently.

You may find the following helpful as at times parents are not aware of how absences add up. We appreciate parents do not want to keep children off school and at times it is unavoidable – for example to avoid spreading infection.

I am writing to all families where attendance is below 90%. This is the same as missing one day a fortnight which obviously has an impact on learning and progress.

I felt you would want to know that your child's attendance this half term has been _____%.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Norbury
Headteacher

Appendix 2

Manual monitoring

RECORD OF LETTERS SENT

YEAR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 (circle the appropriate year)

PUPIL'S NAME	DOB	DATE LETTERS SENT			NOTES
		FIRST	SECOND	THIRD	

Appendix 3 – Letter One
Example threshold 96%

LETTER ONE

Date

Name and address of parent

Dear Parent

Re: Name of pupil Dob: School:

I am writing to advise you that «forename»'s school attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to «percentage_attendance»% and as a result we are becoming concerned that «forename» is missing a significant part of learning. I have enclosed a copy of «forename»'s attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning, and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement. Good attendance enables students to keep up with the work required.

I will continue to monitor «forename»'s attendance and I look forward to seeing an improvement. If possible, and again if it is medical please ensure we have relevant doctor's notes and appointment details.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on «forename» attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact me. However, it does no harm in speaking with the teacher or attendance team, because together we can make a difference.

.
Yours sincerely

Head of Year / Headteacher or other relevant Pastoral Personnel

cc Education Welfare Officer – (*for information only and to be available on*

request) Enc Record of attendance
School Attendance Leaflet

Appendix 4 – Letter Two example threshold 94%

LETTER TWO

Date

Name and address of parent

Re: Name of pupil Dob:

School: Dear Parent

I am writing to inform you that «forename»'s Attendance is still causing concern. We are very worried that continued poor attendance is affecting «forename»'s progress and we need to meet with you urgently.

You are required to attend a meeting with a member of the Attendance Team to discuss this matter further at the date and time below.

Date: Time:

Should «forename»'s attendance remain irregular; the Local Authority may be requested to take more formal action. This could result in a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996,** and a fine of up to **£2500 and/or 3 months in prison.**

Medical evidence is now required for any future absences to be authorised with immediate effect. We look forward to meeting you to discuss any concerns you may have so we can continue to support our students in making good progress and I hope that you will work with us to improve «forename»'s attendance and therefore avoid the need for legal proceedings to be implemented. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely

Head of Year / Headteacher or other relevant Pastoral

Personnel cc Education Welfare Officer -
Encs Record of Attendance
School Attendance Leaflet

Appendix 5 – letter Three Example threshold 92%

LETTER THREE – PENALTY NOTICE WARNING

Dear xxx

Re: Child Name: xxx DOB: xxx
School:

As the Attendance Officer for xxx, it has been brought to my attention that xxx has been absent from school for xxx sessions this school year/over the previous xxx weeks. I enclose a record of XXX's attendance.

As parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually.

With effect from September 2015 schools have been advised by the government's Department for Education (DfE) that the Persistent Absence (PA) threshold will be reduced to 10%. Until this date it has been 15%.

This means that if a child/young person has an overall attendance of 90% or less over a given period, they will be classified as a persistent absentee pupil.

I am therefore writing to inform you that if attendance fails to improve during the next (4) weeks, the case may be referred to Cambridgeshire County Council for a Penalty Notice fine to be issued.

Yours sincerely

Enc. Record of attendance
Attendance Leaflet (delete if not appropriate)

Schools need to continue to monitor after the application of a PN and if attendance fails to improve then refer to linked EWO. Non buy back academies refer to the Legal Panel

Schools may find the

Following example letters

Useful…

APPENDIX 6

REFERAL TO EWO LETTER FOR MAINTAINED AND ACADEMIES BUYING BACK

Date

Name and address of parent

School ref

Re: Name of pupil Dob: School:

Dear Parent

I am writing to advise you that «forename»'s school attendance has not significantly improved since I last contacted you.

I have enclosed a copy of «forename»'s attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised.

I am now formally requesting the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer who will contact you in due course to arrange a meeting.

I will continue to be available to discuss this matter with you. Please telephone me on the number above should you require an appointment.
.

Yours sincerely

Head of Year / Headteacher or other relevant Pastoral Personnel

cc Education Welfare Officer

Appendix 7

FOLKSWORTH C OF E (C) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Application for Leave of Absence from School During Term Time

School Section – Please read this following information carefully

As a parent or carer you are strongly urged to avoid leave of absence from school during term time. Should this be absolutely unavoidable then you should fill in this form and return it to the school prior to the absence. **We expect attendance at school to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.** The Government implemented new legislation that came into effect from September 2013 which means that schools may only authorise leave of absence in **exceptional circumstances**. A parent/carer does not have any right to leave of absence during term time and if your request is refused the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If you should choose to take your child/ren away from school when leave of absence has not been authorised, this could result in legal action being taken or a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

A Penalty Notice involves a fine of £60.00 per child, per parent/carer if paid within 21 days, rising to £120.00 per child, per parent/carer if paid within 28 days. Should a parent/carer on whom a notice is served fails to pay the full amount of the fine within the specified time he/she will be liable to prosecution in a Magistrates Court where on conviction a sentence or a fine of up to £2500.00 or up to 3 months in prison may be imposed.

Penalty Notices may only be served in accordance with the terms of the County Council's local Code of Conduct, a copy of which is retained by the school.

Should leave of absence be taken after permission has been withheld then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This will appear both in the school register and in your child's report. Persistent unauthorised absence may result in the involvement of the Educational Welfare Office and possible legal proceedings.

Parents Section

I request that leave of absence is granted for :

1st Child's Name Class

2nd Child's Name Class

Names of any other siblings and school they attend:

(First date of absence) to (Last date of absence)

Please explain the exceptional circumstances that require a leave of absence during term time:

……

……

……

Parent/Carer Signature…… Date ……

Office Section

Number of previous applications granted this academic year ☐ Authorised ☐ Unauthorised ☐

Headteacher Signature …… Date ……

Notes ……

School Record Entry (SIMS) …… Date ……

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

If pupils aren't in school, they can't learn.

High rates of absence are associated with low academic achievement and increased chances of being drawn into crime and anti-social behaviour.

Survey of 30,000 16 year olds showed that persistent truants are less likely to be successful in their GCSEs (Youth Cohort Student 2002 DES)

What you can do to help?

✓ make sure your child attends regularly and punctually

✓ contacting the school with the reasons for absence

✓ contact the school if your child is unwilling to attend school. The school can usually resolve most difficulties

✓ avoid taking holidays during term time

What your child will miss?

- A significant and disproportionate amount of teacher's time is taken from the class while they work with pupils who have missed important steps.
- In addition, those in the same workgroups as absent pupils will invariably have their learning held up
- Work missed cannot be covered again by the teacher
- Links that are missed will affect future learning and may lead to confusion.

❖◆❖◆❖◆❖◆❖

There are 190 school days in the year, leaving 175 other days for holidays, family events etc.

95% attendance means that your child has missed two weeks of their schooling

90% attendance means they have missed 19 days – nearly four weeks.

85% attendance means they have missed nearly six weeks – that's almost half a term.