Attendance Policy

FLOREAT WANDSWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

ADOPTED BY: SSB

DATE of ADOPTION: September 2024

DATE of LAST REVIEW: September 2024

REVIEWED BY: Headteacher

NEXT REVIEW DATE: July 2025

Active Agents: SSB, Headteacher, General Staff, Attendance Lead

Contents

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1. 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

- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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 Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The School Standards Board

The governing board is responsible for:

1. Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
2. Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
3. Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
4. Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
5. Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
6. Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
7. Including Attendance as agenda item as instructed according to the SSB workplan.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

1. Implementation of this policy at the school
2. Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
3. Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
4. Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
5. Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

1. Leading attendance across the school
2. Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
3. Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
4. Having an oversight of data analysis
5. Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
6. Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
7. Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
8. Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the headteacher and can be contacted via the school office on **020 8353 4195**.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

1. Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
2. Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
3. Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
4. Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
5. Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is the headteacher and can be contacted via 020 8353 4195

3.5 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 a day using our MIS system.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the leadership team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am 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

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 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
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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 8.30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.30pm, 1pm or 1.30pm depending on the year group and wil be closed immediately after the register is taken.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, 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.

4.3 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.

Parents must fill in a Absence Request Form (see Appendix 3) if planned absence is going to take place and include sufficient evidence.

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 also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 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

The school safeguarding team monitors lateness and punctuality very closely on a weekly basis. If concerns are raised then pupils are added to a central record with data and actions recorded.

4.5 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 contact the local authority or visit the family home if serious safeguarding concerns are raised.
- 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

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via the school report. If concerns are raised then the office team will provide parents with a report when required.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as leave for one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include
the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child or a
housing crisis which prevents attendance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or via email on request. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below– to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised
  absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice
  inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

1. If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.
2. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.
3. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We use the following ways to promote positive attendance and punctuality and to prevent attendance and punctuality issues arising:

- Setting targets for attendance and making these public through our assemblies and Newsletter;
- Individual awards (example below) by the Attendance Lead for 100% attendance over a term and a year;
- Staff being welcoming while on Gate Duty and Early Morning Duty and checking in with 'at risk' families;
- Being clear about what is unacceptable, i.e. unauthorised absence and poor punctuality; and,
- Keeping attendance as a high profile issue in Newsletters and correspondence to parents.

Floreat Wandsworth
100% ATTENDANCE AWARD

You have been in school every day from
September to the February Half Term.

You have always been on time as well!

Well done to you and your family - it's a
team effort!

Presented by Mr Custance 19.2.24

Example of our weekly parent communication:

Attendance
Well done to Year 4 - you are leading the way with excellent standards of attendance!
Nursery: 94%
Reception: 95%
Year 1: 96%
Year 2: 93%
Year 3: 94%
Year 4: 97% (wow - this is really impressive!)
Year 5: 94%
Year 6: 94%
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Term Time Holidays and Trips

We are disappointed that some parents continue to take their child(ren) out or are planning to take their child(ren) out for a holiday or trip during term time.

We have had recent requests from parents to take their children out of school to go on holiday, another request to collect their children up early to avoid traffic on the motorway and a request to take children out of school to go to a music festival. These are not valid absence reasons and they will all be marked as unauthorised absences.

We are particularly concerned about the impact these absence requests are having on other pupils as the teacher must spend time with the absent child when they return to ensure that they understand the learning they have missed.

7. Attendance monitoring

- The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.
- Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.
- Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.
- The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, 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

7.4 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.

When attendance nears this level children miss significant amounts of schooling; meaning that their educational progress is put at risk. We need parents' full support in ensuring that attendance does not reach this level. However, if for any reason a child's attendance does fall into this category parents will be asked to do all they can to improve the situation. Families will be supported in this via the school's robust systems for managing persistent absence.

The school will :

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
- Discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
- Explain the help that is available
- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the leadership team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
	Authorised absence	
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

ABSENCE REQUEST FORM (ARF)

Child's Name and DoB:		
Class:		
Full name of all parents / carers:		
Address of parents / carers:		
	Tel:	Tel:
Siblings / Siblings School (if different)		
First spoken language if not English:		
First written language if not English:		

Start date of absence:	
Date of return to school:	
Reason for absence (this is an unavoidable circumstance resulting in this request for absence). **Please include and attach evidence where applicable** (e.g. appointment letter).	

Both parents/carers to sign where appropriate.

Signed:		**Full Name:**		**Date:**	
Signed:		**Full Name:**		**Date:**	

To be completed by the school:

Total number of days requested:		
Percentage of Attendance	**This Year:**	**Last year (if relevant):**
Leave of absence AGREED / DECLINED for the following reason/s:		
Decision letter sent to parent/carer? (date)		
Signature of Head		**Date:**

Please complete in BLOCKED CAPITALS

Pupil's Name _____ DOB _____

Class _____   Leaving Date _____

Name of new school _____

Address of new school _____

_____

_____

Telephone number of new school _____

Mother's Full Name _____

Father's Full Name _____—

Pupil's new address _____

_____

Contact numbers _____

Email Address   _____

Reason for leaving **Floreat Wandsworth**

Signed:

Print Name: Date:

Name: _____

UPN: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Current School or Setting: _____

Anticipated Start Date: _____

Special Educational Needs (SEN):

Does the student have any special educational needs?

If yes, please provide details:

_____
_____
_____

Safeguarding:

Has the student been the subject of any safeguarding concerns?

If yes, please provide details:

_____
_____
_____

Behaviour Information:

- Has the student had any significant behaviour issues at their current school?

- If yes, please specify:

   _____
   _____

- Has a behaviour plan been put in place?

   _____

- Are there any additional support needs? _____

Attendance Information:

- Has the student had any attendance issues at their current school or setting?

- If yes, please specify:

   _____
   _____

- Has an attendance plan been put in place?

   _____

- Are there any additional support needs?

   _____

Signature/Name of current school administrator:

Date:

Signature/Name of new school administrator:

Date:

Please return to office@wandsworth.floreat.org.uk