

## **The Forest C E Federation Attendance Policy**

### **School Attendance**

#### **Ethos**

The Forest CE Federation is proud to be a group of Church of England School's where every child and adult matters. We aim to serve our communities providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. We provide a welcoming and caring environment, in partnership with parents, Church and community, where each child is valued as an individual. Mutual respect and responsibility are developed and every child is encouraged to reach his or her potential.

#### **Why is it important for children not to miss school?**

Children only get one chance at school. If they do not attend school regularly they may not be able to keep up with their school work or could miss a whole section of the curriculum. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will also help children later on in life. Lessons are usually planned in sequences with skills and knowledge built over a series of lessons. This means that, even with additional teacher support, a child may find it more difficult to access lessons on their return.

#### **Pupils whose attendance is good:**

- Understand lessons better
- Achieve better results
- Sustain friendships
- Have good self-esteem/are positive/are confident
- Get better jobs in the future

#### **Pupils whose attendance is unsatisfactory:**

- Don't understand lessons so well
- Get behind with their work
- Find it difficult to maintain friendship groups
- Have low self-esteem/confidence
- Achieve less

#### **What does good attendance mean?**

- 100% attendance is when a pupil arrives on time and attends every lesson every day
- At the Forest CE Federation we expect all pupils to achieve 95% or above
- Below 90% is unacceptable attendance.

#### **What does unsatisfactory attendance mean?**

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- Attending 90% of the time or less. This will have serious effect on learning
- One half day's absence every week will give 90% attendance
- Continual lateness
- Research suggests that 17 days missed from school often equates to one level lower in KS2 SAT's

**What happens if my child is late?**

Children are expected to be in school for registration at 9am (8.50am for Stoke Bruerne). Any child arriving after this time should enter the school via the office and if accompanied, should give a reason for the lateness. This will be recorded in the register as present but late. Any child arriving after 9.15am, will be recorded as absent for that session, unless the office has been notified otherwise. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. The headteacher monitors the pupil's attendance every half term and reports to the governing body.

Letters will be sent out to parents whose children are persistently late and a meeting maybe arranged if the situation does not improve. Ultimately families can be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

**School Attendance Regulations from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013**

School attendance regulations changed in September 2013 under Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which amended the 2006 regulations.

Headteachers will no longer be able to sanction up to 10 days holiday in term time. Any holiday in term time will be treated as unauthorised absence and will be taken into account when referring parents and families to Education Welfare Services.

The regulations do allow headteachers to sanction absence in "exceptional circumstances". Please find below a list of allowable absences. This policy has been written following national guidelines.

**Allowed absence**

- Sickness
- Emergency medical appointments
- Day/s for specific religious observance
- School is closed due to unforeseen circumstances
- Hospital appointments

**Allowed absence in exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the headteacher)**

- Family bereavement or close friend bereavement
- Other compassionate grounds
- Family wedding taking part on a school day
- Family crisis
- Examinations off site

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- Attendance at an event at the request of a public organisation
- Visit to a new school if family is relocating

All requests for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be placed in writing prior to the event. The headteacher will then review each request and decide if it meets the criteria, Parents will then be informed of the outcome.

We believe that the majority of parents realise that 'every lesson counts' and encourage regular attendance at school. We have high expectations of our children. You have high expectations of us. These expectations cannot be met if your child is absent.

**Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their child aged 5-16, if registered at a school, attends that school regularly. Penalties will be issued when a child misses five consecutive school days or the equivalent of 5 days within a six week period from June 2016, which are recorded as unauthorised absences. The initial fixed penalty charge is £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt.**

Please see link below for further information from Northamptonshire County Council.

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/EducationandLearning/Parents/Attend/Pages/truancy.aspx>

### **Reporting absences and Late Arrivals/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:**

- Do all they can to ensure that their child arrives on time for morning and afternoon school. Morning registration is at 8.50am for Stoke Bruerne and 9am at Tiffield & Whittlebury. Afternoon registration is at 1pm. Pupils will be marked a 'late' – before close of register (L) or 'late' – after close of register' (U). The register closes at 9.30am.
- Notify the school on the first day of absence either in writing, by telephone, by electronic means or in person to give the reason for absence and to estimate the like period of absence.
- Supply a written note on the pupil's return to school and this must be handed to the class teacher or the school office.
- Get in touch at an early stage to discuss any concerns they may have about a child's attitude to school.

#### **In return the school will:**

- Contact home on the first day of absence if no message has been received from home.
- Contact home over any unexplained absences.
- Follow up promptly any concerns that parent's pass on to us that may be affecting a child's attitude to or well-being in school.

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- Monitor late attendance and will follow up persistent cases. If there has been no contact with school to give a reason for the absence; after 2 days the school will contact the Education Welfare Officer to register concern.
- Involve the School Support Services to help students reintegrate into school after illness or difficult circumstances.
- Regularly remind pupils of the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Our expectations are outlined in our Home School Agreement.
- Reward good or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.
- Class teachers will ensure that the correct symbol has been used to code the register for every absence.

### **Lateness**

Pupils arriving late will be requested to sign in. A book is provided for this purpose. Late marks are recorded on the register. Parents/carers of persistently late pupils are sent a letter reiterating the start time of school and the importance of punctual attendance. Persistent lateness will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer.

If a child on the 'Child Protection' register is absent from school, the Headteacher must be informed immediately, even if the reason for absence has been provided.

### **Child Protection and Family Welfare**

On rare occasions a child may be reluctant to come to school. The child or family may be experiencing problems and need support. The school will undertake to work with the family to resolve the difficulties and a meeting may be convened. If improvement is not evidenced then a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officers and the school may contact any other support agencies which may be able to offer further help. Long term absentees may be offered a Pastoral Support Plan to aid a return to school.

Our Education Welfare Officer (EWO) visits our schools if requested and will work closely with pupils and families where there are concerns. The Education Welfare Service can be contacted on 01604 259599. The EWO will be able to assist parents where difficulties arise.

In extreme cases the EWS can also initiate legal proceedings against parents who do not fulfil their responsibility in sending children to school. Before a case goes to court, Parenting Contracts are drawn up setting targets for attendance levels. There may be interviews leading to a fixed penalty notice.

In all cases the prime aim of all actions is to get a child attending school on a regular basis.

### **Truancy**

If the school suspects that a child may be truanting then action must be taken. Class teachers must inform the Headteacher (or senior staff in the Headteacher's absence) who will contact the parents/carers. The Headteacher and parents/carers will decide how to proceed. Options include

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invoking the school's Behaviour Policy or, in cases causing major concern, contacting the Education Welfare Officer, the police or social services.