



## THE FOREST FAMILY Attendance Procedures

**Please read in conjunction with JTMAF attendance policy. <https://jtmat.co.uk/privacy/policies/>**

*Our Forest Family schools want to ensure that our children are able to take the fullest possible advantages of all that we have to offer. We want every child to attend school every day that they can. This procedure statement aims to set down the expectations of attendance on children in our Federation schools which is underpinned by the JTMAF policy.*

The member of SLT in charge of attendance is Mrs C Gethin. The following 'in-school' procedure is followed for monitoring children's attendance:

- The office manager produces a monthly report which outlines all children who are between 93% and 90% (persistent absence) and below.
- A daily overview of children's absence patterns are also carefully considered and monitored.
- In the first instance, where there are concerns, attendance is monitored and if there is no improvement parents are informed by letter.
- Should the attendance not improve, a second letter may be sent.
- Where there is still no improvement a letter may be sent requesting medical evidence be provided to authorise any further absence. This medical evidence can be in the form of an appointment card or prescription, for example.
- Parents will be supported to reengage children with school once the GP note period has concluded.
- John Taylor Multi Academy Trust's Intervention Manager will support children whose attendance gives cause for concern. This will involve assisting in resolving any situation which may be having an adverse effect on a children's attendance. The Attendance Intervention Manager will undertake case work with children and, their parents where thought appropriate, to improve the child's attendance this may include the use of a Parenting Contract. Casework is completed up to the threshold where statutory action is deemed necessary.

Where there is persistent unauthorised absence then a Penalty Notice may be considered. A statutory response can be considered where there are 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence in the previous 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. The absences do not need to be consecutive. In the situation of persistent unauthorised absence, the parent will only receive one warning notice period in the academic year. Should there be a subsequent period of absence, the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory action.

- The Attendance Intervention Manager will provide appropriate records to the Local Authority for them to fulfil their statutory functions should the Staffordshire County Council Code of Conduct threshold be met. This could result in a fixed Penalty Notice being issued:
- Should a Fixed Penalty Notice be issued, the fine is 'per parent/carer and per child', regardless of who applied for the leave. The parent has 3 choices:

A set fine if paid within 21 days.

An increased fine if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

In the case of a non-payment of the fine the Notice will be withdrawn and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1), of the Education Act 1996. If found 'guilty' then this would result in a criminal record for that parent.

Current Penalty Notice figures can be found in Appendix A

**Or**, ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1966 s.444 which includes:

An Education Supervision Order or School Attendance Order on the child.

A Prosecution under the 1996 Education Act, section 4441 or section 4441 (a).

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Local Authority themselves, to ask for help or information.

The Local Authority is independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Contact

[Educationcoreoffer@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Educationcoreoffer@staffordshire.gov.uk)

### **General absences**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

1 THE FOREST FAMILY asks you to call the main school line to report reasons for absence.

All Saints – 01283 712385 / Needwood 01283 575216.

2 Should the absence reach 5 or more days, we will require medical evidence to authorise such a prolonged period of time.

3 Clerical assistants and office managers will make efforts to contact the parents of any child who is absent but there has been no information received during the morning. Should no reason for absence have been ascertained,

the Attendance Intervention Manager or another member of staff may complete a home visit to gain the reason for the absence. A home visit may also be completed if:

- the school receive any additional contradictory information
- the staff are concerned about the child's absence,
- the absence is during the last week of a school term, even if contact has been received from parents.

4 In the case of an enforced closure or school transport difficulties due to exceptional circumstances the "Y" code is used, which is not classed as an absence. This can be applied to children for whom getting to school is problematic due to exceptional circumstances even if the school is officially open. Ordinarily, this relates to children's who live beyond walking distance of the school.

### **Lateness**

*Childrens who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other children. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence.*

- Children must be in class by 8.55am at All Saints, Rangemore and 9.00am at Needwood each day.
- *The school gates will be shut by 8.55am All Saints Rangemore and 9.00am Needwood. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will be entered into the late book.*
- The school monitors late arrival of children's. In the morning those arriving through the school gate later than the time outlined will be marked as arriving late via a 'L' in the register.
- Persistent lateness will be monitored and the Attendance Intervention Manager may undertake casework with children and their parents, to overcome any barriers to improve punctuality. Ultimately, continued unauthorised lateness could result in Statutory Action being taken by the Local Authority.
- Children's arriving late because of contract taxi / bus lateness will be marked present.
- Morning registration closes at 09:20. Children arriving after 09.20 will have a 'U' (unauthorised absence) recorded on the register, unless there is an acceptable reason verified by a parent.

### **Absence for Medical Appointments**

We would ask that, wherever possible, doctor and dental appointments are made outside the school day. If this is not possible, please call the school and **provide the school with a copy of medical evidence**, such as the appointment card. No evidence of the appointment may mean that the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

Following medical evidence being provided, your child's attendance record will be marked '**M**'. This represents an authorised absence.

Should there be ongoing medical appointments or the need for time off due to the medical issue then a letter stating this from a medical professional will be required. If the medical professional states that this is ongoing issue and sets a date to review the situation, then no further evidence will be required until the date of the review.

### **Planned Absences**

Statutory guidelines state "Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances". Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be made in advance of the event and in writing with specific details included such as dates, and should be addressed to the Head of School. If a leave of absence is granted, then it will be for a fixed period of time. Should the absence not be granted, but still taken, then it will classed as **unauthorised leave of absence**. An application for a Penalty Notice to be issued from Staffordshire County Council will be made for any unauthorised leave of absence of 6 or more sessions (3 days) in the current or previous half term.

Should a leave of absence be granted, regulations are clear that any lateness in the return to school from the granted period, may be recorded as **unauthorised leave of absence**.

**Unauthorised leave of absence** presents a risk of a Penalty Notice being issued. Please note that:

- A parent can receive more than one Penalty Notice per academic year;
- The school will follow the Staffordshire County Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices.

If a parent does not apply for leave but we believe that the child has been taken on holiday, then we will write to the parent to express our concern. The parent will be expected to provide contrary evidence to support the absence to be received at school by a specified date. Should the supporting documentation not be provided then the absence will be coded as **unauthorised leave of absence** and the relevant procedures will be applied. Retrospective approval for absence cannot be granted.

Any request for planned absences for a child to participate in a sporting or other educational activity, such as a dance

or music exam, should be addressed to the Head of School. A notification of the exam date, such as the confirmation letter, should be included.

### **Other circumstances**

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement).

### **School Attendance Targets**

The attendance target for The Forest Family **for the academic year 2018-19 is: 97%** (although we have adjusted Needwood's to 96% due to exceptional circumstances).

**The school will notify the Local Authority, at** regular intervals, as required by Government Guidance, any children's who fail to attend school regularly.

### **Those people responsible for attendance matters are:**

Mrs C Gethin - Executive Headteacher

Mrs S Hickey – Attendance Intervention Manager

All of our office staff manage attendance administration.

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Current Penalty Notice Payment Details (November 2016)**

Fixed Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1966 s.444

Should a Fixed Penalty Notice be issued, the fine is 'per parent/carer and per child', regardless of who applied for the leave. The parent has 3 choices:

1. A fine of £60 if paid within 21 days.
2. A fine of £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
3. In the case of a non-payment of the fine the Notice will be withdrawn and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1), of the Education Act 1996. If found 'guilty' then this would result in a criminal record for that parent.