



# THE FOREST FEDERATION

## Attendance Policy

This policy has been reviewed considering:

- The Department for Education's document '[School Attendance : statutory guidance and departmental advice' October 2014](#)
- The Staffordshire county council's model policy
- School specific procedures.
- The following legal frameworks:

- The Education Act 1996 ;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;
- The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011. ;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
- The Education Act 2005;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments; and
- The Education and Skills Act 2008.
- The Equality Act 2010

### AIMS OF THE POLICY

To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- This Policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible in order to achieve as highly as they can both academically and socially.
- Meet the Government attendance targets set for us.
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.

### INTRODUCTION

Our Federation schools want to ensure that our pupils are able to take the fullest possible advantages of all that we have to offer. We want every pupil to attend school every day that they can. This policy statement aims to set down the expectations of attendance on pupils in our Federation schools.

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is certainly possible in the absence of illness, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent inform the school of the reasons for absence.

Pupils are expected to attend school every day of the academic year unless they are not well enough to do so. Pupils are not expected to attend on INSET days when school is closed to pupils.

It is always the aim to keep school open to pupils every day of the academic year and senior leaders take this responsibility seriously however, the Executive Head Teacher and Governors reserve the right to close school to pupils in the event of unforeseen or circumstances beyond its control (for example critical incidents, health and safety reasons etc.). In such situations school will make every effort to inform parents as soon as possible of such closure using the school website, through other communication methods such as e-mail and text and recorded on <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/schoolsandcolleges/emergencyclosures/schoolclosurelist/schoolclosurelist.aspx>

### PRINCIPLES

- Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.
- This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the wellbeing of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs.
- All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable

#### **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES :**

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately
- We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.
- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

#### **PARENTS OR CARERS RESPONSIBILITIES :**

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day at 8.55am at All Saints, Rangemore and 9.00 a.m. at Needwood.
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- To inform school on **every** day of any absence.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and to make applications for leave in exceptional circumstances in writing on the school's 'Leave Of Absence Form', giving the reason for the request with as much notice as possible.
- Medical appointments
  - To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.
  - Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness.
  - Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.
- Sign the Home school agreement agreeing to: Ensure that your child attends school punctually every day during term time, unless there is a good reason for absence (e.g. illness).
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.
- If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:
  - Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
  - Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

#### **THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD ATTENDANCE AND ITS LINK TO ATTAINMENT :**

- The Department of Education has published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams. [February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015 Department of Education](#)). The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years. The results are very clear – missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement.

#### **ADMISSIONS REGISTER**

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school. All schools (including academies) must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

### **ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION :**

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at [enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk) of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

### **ATTENDANCE DATA AND TARGETS**

The Executive Head Teacher analyses individual pupil attendance. These figures are reported to the Local Authority, Governors and OFSTED. We analyse data for the whole school against national standards as well as considering our equality objectives for pupils with protected characteristics, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

This data included for two terms is available annually for the previous year in October whilst full year data is not available until March of the next year. This two terms data appears in school national data reports which is used by OFSTED as an indicator of the category of the school. Full year data is important and provides the full picture of attendance patterns for the school

Pupil's attendance rates are discussed with parents at parents' consultation evenings and reported on pupils' end of year reports. Where a pupil's attendance rate falls the Executive Head Teacher informs parents and discusses actions to improve the attendance rate so that it does not go below the 90% persistent absence rate.

Where the Executive Head Teacher is concerned about a pupils' rate or pattern of attendance they may seek advice or notify the Educational Welfare Service.

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The School's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

### **DEFINITION OF PERSISTENT ABSENCE :**

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing around 10% or more of the typical amount of possible sessions across a given period.

Letters will be sent to parents notifying them that their child's attendance has got to 92/3% as a reminder that they are nearing the 90% persistent absent percentage and when attendance has reached 90%

Persistent Absence is a serious problem for pupils. Much of the work children miss is never made up, leaving these pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. There is also clear evidence to link poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement:

Pupils whose attendance falls into Persistent Absence next academic year will also lead to intervention from the schools Attendance officer and the Education Welfare Worker.

### **THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

The school Office manager will log instances of absence and lateness and the Executive Head Teacher will analyse regularly. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

Stage 1: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact with home.

Stage 2: If the concerns persist the school will write to the parents/carers.

Stage 3: If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, school representative and the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues. Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action.

Revised December 2017

The Local Authority is informed of the absence of any child for a continuous period of 10 days or more without school's permission. Our schools' involve the Local Support Team and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child is less than 10 days but presents a cause for concern.

## **SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

Useful Contact Details

All Saints, Rangemore: 01283 712385

Needwood: 01283 575216

## **NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE**

Parents are asked to telephone the school on the first day of absence before 8.55 at All Saints, Rangemore and before 9.00am at Needwood to inform the school that their child will not be attending. Parents must give reasons for the absence and an indication of when a child might be expected to return to school. A log of the telephone call must be made by the member of staff and passed to the Office Services Manager. The member of staff taking the message should then inform the relevant class teacher. Written confirmation for reasons of absence are also requested (but not mandatory if telephone notifications are logged).

When a child is absent from school but no notification has been received, every effort is made to contact the parents to establish the child's location and reason for non-attendance. In the event that school cannot make contact, the school will notify the Education Welfare Service.

## **ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME**

Use of Local Authority Fixed Penalty Protocol as a parental measure to improve pupil attendance in accordance with the Department of Education [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures Statutory Guidance January 2015](#) and Staffordshire County council's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices, below.

Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Request for leave of absence'.

Please note that **standard holiday leave will not be authorised**. (*Holidays, extended trips to visit families abroad, day trips, visits to theme parks, birthdays, visits to the dentist and shopping are not legitimate reasons for requesting exceptional leave of absence. An example of an exceptional circumstance would be a day to attend the funeral of a family member*).

Whilst the decision to authorise a leave of absence is at the discretion of the Executive Head Teacher, **only exceptional circumstances** warrant an authorised leave of absence. We consider each request individually taking into account the **circumstances**, such as: the **nature of the event** for which leave is sought; the **frequency** of the request; whether the parent gave **advance notice**; and the **pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling**.

There are approximately 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

Should you request a leave of absence (holiday) in term time your request for leave of absence will be assessed by the Executive Head Teacher who will decide whether the request to take your child/ren on leave of absence is exceptional. You will then receive a letter to state whether your request for leave of absence has been authorised or unauthorised.

Should you choose to take the unauthorised leave of absence then you may be issued with a fixed penalty notice from Staffordshire County Council. Once the penalty notice is issued parents have 28 days to pay the penalty notice. A penalty notice is initially for £60. If this £60 is not paid within 21 days from the date of issue it rises to £120. If, after 28 days of the date of issue the £120 is not paid we will prosecute the parents under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This will lead to a hearing in the Magistrates Court and may result in a fine of up to £1,000.

## **Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time from 1 January 2018**

Any period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. Our Executive Headteacher continues to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by our Executive Headteacher to the local authority.

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve-week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

#### Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

If a pupil achieves 10 unauthorised late marks a before a penalty notice warning could be issued. Late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are therefore encouraged where possible to ensure your child attends school on time. However, if your child is late you must inform us of the reason(s) why, as we may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

### **LATENESS**

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.

- Children must be in class by 8.55am at All Saints, Rangemore and 9.00am at Needwood each day.
- Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken.
- 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.
- Lateness will be monitored by the Executive Head Teacher and the E.W.O. (Education Welfare Officer) will follow this up.
- If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 9.25am at All Saints Rangemore and 9.30am at Needwood the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.
- If something has happened and there is an exceptional circumstance for being late please notify the school.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Attendance Officer. Systems and support are put in place to support the children's understanding of being punctual and we hope this supports families.

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### **SICKNESS**

- Please notify the school on each day of the absence.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.
- Parents are requested not to send pupils to school for a period of 48 hours following incidents of sickness and/or stomach upsets.
- In the event that a child becomes so unwell during the school day that they are unable to participate in lessons and activities, parents will be contacted and requested to collect their child from school.
- The school has an obligation to contact the county Health and Safety advisory team of occurrences of notifiable diseases, under Health and Safety Guidelines.

### **PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

We celebrate good attendance throughout our School by awarding individual certificates to individual children who have 100% for each term.

### **THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER**

The Education Welfare Officer strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness. Section 444 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence." The Education Welfare Service, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.



**Signed:**

Revised September 2015. Approved October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Curriculum and Standards. September 2017 and further adjustments in line with the details about Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time from 1 January 2018 - **December 2017.**