

Forest Academy & Elveden Church of England Primary Academy



Attendance Policy

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Signed: (hard copy signed) (Chair of Governors)

FOREST ACADEMY & ELVEDEN CHURCH PRIMARY ACADEMY
ATTENDANCE POLICY
September 2020– September 2021

Aim

The aim of Forest Academy and Elveden C of E Primary Academy is to provide an environment, which encourages all our children to attend school every day that school is open and punctually. This is vital if we are to ensure they succeed in school and in their future lives.

The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance; parents, pupils and all school staff.

Parents Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school every day and punctually section 444 of the Act says: -

“If a child of compulsory school age who is registered pupil at a school fails to attend every day at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence”.

(NB Where the Education Act refers to “he”, it also means “she”).

If a pupil is prevented from attending school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of the pupil’s absence. This must be by telephone on the first and every day of absence. If this is not received the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Wherever possible, parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their children during school hours.

Parents also have a responsibility for following school procedures if their child arrives late and must report to the school office. If they arrive after registers close, this will be marked as an unauthorised. Persistent lateness will result in a “late letter” being sent to parents.

Pupil Leave of Absence Requests

Parents **do not** have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. The school may, grant authorised absences in exceptional circumstances. **These are limited to:**

- Leave for a religious ceremony (If this takes place outside of the UK, 3 days/6 sessions will be authorised. 2 days travelling and 1 day for the ceremony)
- Leave if a child has a parent in the armed forces which determines when they are able to take leave. Written confirmation that leave is regulated will be required from the Commanding Officer. The parent in the armed forces must be travelling with their family.

If you wish to take your child out of school during term time you must complete a leave of absence request form which can be obtained from the school office and must be completed at least one month in advance. You will be notified of the outcome of your request within 10 working by letter.

There is no absolute right for parents to remove their child from school for an absence and expect the Headteacher to authorise that absence.

Authorised absences

Providing an explanation is received, an absence may be authorised for: -

- ❖ Illness/medical needs
- ❖ Dental / medical appointments
- ❖ Family bereavement and funeral.
- ❖ Attendance at a Pupil Referral Unit
- ❖ The pupils parents are Travellers and the pupil is engaged in his/her parent's work
- ❖ Self-isolating with symptoms during COVID pandemic
- ❖ Self-isolating as had contact with COVID positive patient

Unauthorised absences

The following circumstances will be classed as unauthorised:-

- ❖ Family holidays
- ❖ If no explanation is received from parents
- ❖ For looking after siblings
- ❖ For shopping trips
- ❖ For unexceptional special occasions e.g. birthdays
- ❖ If medical evidence has been asked for and not provided e.g. appointment card/text/prescribed medication box.

The legal basis for penalty notices

The law says that parents and carers whose children of compulsory school age are absent from school without good reason are committing an offence, and those parents may be prosecuted in the Magistrate's Court. Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced additional powers under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 authorising local authorities to issue penalty notices in cases of **unauthorised absence** from school.

When will a penalty notice be issued?

The school will submit a penalty notice referral to the local authority that has the responsibility to issue penalty notices in the following situations where unauthorised absence occurs:

- ❖ Where a pupil has taken holiday during term-time and the absence is not authorised by the school.
- ❖ Where a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.
- ❖ Where a pupil has missed at least 8 sessions (4 school days) due to unauthorised absence during an academic year.
- If a child has persistent medical absences, then a letter requesting medical evidence will be sent to parents to authorise further absences. Without medical evidence, these sessions will be recorded as unauthorised and could lead to a penalty notice. Medical evidence can be in the form of an appointment card/prescription.
- In every case a pupil will have lost a minimum of 8 sessions (4 school days) of unauthorised absence during the academic year.

How do I pay and what happens if I don't pay the penalty notice?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the penalty notice which you will receive from Suffolk County Council. The penalty must be paid in full to them. The penalty is **£60** per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to **£120** per parent per child if paid after 21 days.

If you do not pay the penalty in full within 42 days of issue the LA are required to start legal proceedings against you in the local Magistrate's Court for the original offence of failing to ensure your child attends school every day. This may lead to a fine of up to £1000 and a court appearance.

Following up absences

- ❖ Rapid responses are essential if there is no contact from the parent. We will phone parents on the morning of the first day of absence. If there is answerphone facility we will leave a message asking you to call the school to explain the absence.
- ❖ In cases where there is doubt about an explanation received, contact will be made with the parent.

Strategies employed to support pupils and parents

- ❖ The school will continuously monitor attendance and send letters to parents when attendance declines.
- ❖ If there is no significant improvement the school may refer to the Education Welfare Officer.
- ❖ A monitoring program may be set up between the parent, the school and the Education Welfare Officer, with the aim of improving attendance.

Acknowledging good attendance

- ❖ Pupils will be acknowledged in assembly at the end of each term with gold, silver and bronze certificates and class prizes awarded as appropriate.

Support for pupils who have difficulties attending school

- ❖ Where pupils are absent with good reason (for example because of exclusion or long term illness/medical needs) a member of staff will coordinate meaningful work to be sent home and will ensure it is marked on a regular basis. Parents are responsible for ensuring work is completed and that lines of communication are kept open with the school to fully explain reasons for absence.

Pupils responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of attending school every day. If they are having difficulties, which might prevent them from attending school every day, they should speak to their class teacher. Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn.

School Responsibility

All the staff at the Academies will provide an ethos, which places a high value on attending school every day and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

School staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have good attendance by

- ❖ Ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately
- ❖ Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence only the office can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies authorising the absence.
- ❖ Responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care.
- ❖ Contacting parents when they are concerned about a pupil's absences and recording the contact. The first letter will include your child's registration certificate and make you aware that there is concern regarding attendance. If attendance continues to fall a second letter will be sent asking that all further absences are supported by medical evidence or they will be classed as unauthorised.
- ❖ Consulting the Education Welfare Service if a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern.

- ❖ Reporting poor attendance to the Education Welfare Officer.
- ❖ Acknowledging improvement of attendance of individual pupils and classes.
- ❖ Rewarding good attendance with stickers and certificates.
- ❖ Work with parents to resolve any issues that may affect attendance
- ❖ The home-school agreements include clear understandings about attendance and punctuality.

A GUIDE FOR STAFF

REGISTRATION

Call on the registers:

- ❖ Classroom teachers are responsible for attendance registers, however admin staff record codes for absence.
- ❖ The class teacher will call register promptly at 8.50am for morning registration at both schools.
- ❖ Children at Forest Years 1-6 have a staggered 45 minute break at lunch time and an additional 15 minutes of physical activity in the day, the Daily Mile.
 - Reception: 11.45-12.30pm
 - Year 1: 12-12.45pm
 - Years 2: 12.-12.45pm
 - Years 3 and 4: 12.15-1pm
 - Years 5 and 6: 12.45-1.30pm
- ❖ The registers for the afternoon sessions will close 15 minutes after the start of the afternoon school.
- ❖ Elveden afternoon registration is at 1.00pm for all.
- ❖ Registers will close at 9.05am and 15 minutes after the start of the afternoon school.
- ❖ If a pupil fails to arrive before the register closes, he/she will be marked absent.
- ❖ Pupils, who arrive late, but before the close of registration, should report to the office where they must be signed in by their parent/carer

Who will amend the register?

- ❖ All amendments to the registers will be made by office staff.

Appendix A : due to Covid (2020)

- ❖ Parents are to inform school immediately if their child has COVID symptoms. Other siblings can still attend if no symptoms.
- ❖ Parents are to arrange a test for the child as soon as possible.
- ❖ Parents must inform the school of the result and school will advise on when they can return depending on the result.