



FOXBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy confirmed by the Governing Body of
Foxborough Primary School

Date Ratified: July 2024

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'GK', is written over a horizontal line.

Chair of Governors: Gill Knight

Review Date: July 2027

1. Aims

The purpose of this Attendance policy is to provide clear expectations to all stakeholders for Foxborough Primary School, Teachers, Leaders, Parents, Pupils and Governors, on Attendance and Registration arrangements.

It is within the whole school values to promote outstanding attendance, by pupils, at Foxborough Primary School. It is expected that all pupils, unless there is good reason, will attend school every day. Children have a right to receive an education and all pupils are entitled to a full- time education.

Sometimes, children are reluctant to attend school. Should this be the case, it is requested that parents do not try to conceal the reason for their child's absence, but contact the school to seek advice, guidance, and support.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that a child registered at a school between the ages of 5 to 16 should attend school regularly. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil fails to attend regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence.

A pupil's regular attendance at school is the responsibility of their parent. For the purposes of this policy, a parent refers to any adult who has:

- Parental Responsibility for a child
- Day-to-day care for a child.

Foxborough Primary School have a responsibility to report to their Local Authority if a pupil of compulsory school age is:

- Absent for 20 school days with no explanation given for the absence
- Is regularly absent from school
- Is regularly late arriving to school
- Has been absent from school, for a period of unauthorised leave of absence (Please refer to Unauthorised Leave of Absence, section 9, page 6).

For those pupils of statutory school age, absences from school may be categorised in two ways, either:

- authorised
- unauthorised.

An authorised absence from school is one where the absence has been deemed unavoidable, such as an illness. An unauthorised absence from school is an absence where there has been no clear explanation provided for the cause of absence, the reason provided has not been deemed to be avoidable, such as an appointment for a haircut.

Foxborough Primary School take an official register twice a day: Once at the start of the day and another immediately after the lunch break. Foxborough Primary School will record absences within the registers using the codes as provided by the DfE in *School Attendance: Guidance for Maintained Schools, Academies, Independent Schools and Local Authorities*:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63049617e90e0729e63d3953/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

It is Foxborough Primary School's decision as to whether an absence is classified as authorised or unauthorised.

2. Safeguarding

The safety and wellbeing of our pupils is our primary responsibility. Foxborough Primary School has a **safeguarding duty** to ensure that they seek to find an explanation for any pupil absence. The school will share information with relevant key professionals, or the Local Authority, if this is deemed necessary and in the best interest of the child. These agencies could include:

- engaging with local authority attendance teams and/or independent attendance organisations
- engaging with children's social care staff, including Virtual School Heads and social workers where appropriate

3. Value of Attending Every Day

Research has proven that there is a high correlation between school attendance and academic performance and success, while absence from school is often the greatest single cause of poor performance and achievement.

School Day Times:

We operate a 'soft start' model. Gates are opened to parents at 8.30 and classroom doors are opened at 8.35. The register is taken promptly at 8.45am.

- Monday: 8:45am – 3:30pm
- Tuesday: 8:45am – 3:30pm
- Wednesday: 8:45am – **2:15pm**
- Thursday: 8:45am – 3:30pm
- Friday: 8:45am – 3:30pm

Why is it so important to attend every day?

- Learning is a progressive activity; each day's lessons build upon those of the previous day(s).
- Reading the material and completing work independently does not compensate for the loss of insight gained during class discussion or the loss of competency acquired through high-quality explanations and teacher support.
- Many classes use discussions, demonstrations, experiments and participation as part of the daily learning activities, and these cannot be made up by those who are absent.
- Regular student participation in daily classroom activities plays a significant role in a student's school success.

4. The Benefits to children

- Pupils with good attendance records generally have higher achievement and enjoy school more.
- Having a good education will help to give your child the best possible start in life.
- Regular school attendance patterns encourage the development of other responsible patterns of behaviour.

5. Working Together

A successful education is a collaboration between a school, parent and child. Parents **must** contact the school to provide an explanation for **each day** where a pupil is absent. If an absence is prolonged, or the reason provided is unclear, then further communication may be made to ensure clarity.

It is the aim of the school to provide support, assistance and guidance to overcome barriers which may prevent a pupil from attending school regularly. Parents are requested to engage fully with this support. Continued irregular pupil attendance may lead to a referral and intervention from the Local Authority.

6. Monitoring attendance levels:

Foxborough Primary School has a duty to ensure that we monitor the attendance levels of our pupils. Support, advice and guidance will be offered to the parents of any pupil whose attendance level falls below the required threshold of **96%**. Ultimately, it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Any parent who is deemed to be failing in their responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly may be guilty of an offence under the Education Act 1996. Should parents wish to, they may contact the Local Authority directly for further guidance.

The following table shows the number of days off for each equivalent %.

%	Days Absent
80	39 days off
85	29 days off
90	19 days off
95	9 days off
96	7 days off
97	5 days off
98	4 days off
99	2 days off
100	0 days off

Pupils with a low overall attendance level may be classed as being persistently absent. The Government defines a persistently absent pupil as one who is absent for **10%** or more of the sessions which have been offered to them.

At Foxborough Primary we endeavour to support pupils and families who are or who are at risk of becoming 'persistently absent' by a range of means including:

- a dedicated member of staff to support families (Attendance and Family Support Lead)
- a member of the Senior Leadership Team to work with the Family Support Lead to monitor and support families.
- use and allocation of additional school resources such as **Pupil Premium** funding to support families in receipt and need
- establish robust escalation procedures which are initiated before absence becomes a problem, for example by:
 - sending letters, text messages and/or emails to parents and carers
 - having a weekly review
 - creating attendance clinics
 - engaging with local authority attendance teams and/or independent attendance organisations
 - engaging with children's social care staff, including Virtual School Heads and social workers where appropriate

7. Absences from school:

Should a pupil be absent, it is requested that the parent contacts the school to provide an explanation for this absence. If no explanation is provided, then the school will endeavour to establish contact with the parent to gain an explanation for the absence. Schools will code the reason for the absence within the register.

Should a pupil accrue many absences for medical reasons, then the school may request additional documentation from a health professional to continue to record this absence as authorised. This could take the form a copy of a prescription or an appointment letter. A full GP note is not required. It is requested that all medical appointments occur outside of school time unless the need for the appointment is unavoidable. Should a pupil require to leave the school site, or arrive to school late, due to a medical appointment, it is requested that parents contact the school to inform them of this. Should an absence be deemed to be unavoidable then the absence will be recorded as a medical (authorised) absence.

Should a parent not provide a reason for the absence, or the reason provided is deemed to have been avoidable, or that further documentation has been requested but not provided, then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

8. Responding to non-attendance

When a pupil fails to attend school without satisfactory explanation, we will:

- contact the parent on the first day of absence by telephone call or text; if contact cannot be made a letter/email will be sent home that day to request authorisation.
- if the unauthorised absence has exceeded three school days or should the school have safeguarding concerns, a further phone call, a letter/email or a home visit may be made
- If the pupil or parent fails to respond, the matter will be escalated to a senior member of staff with a formal referral
- At this point or if there are ongoing concerns the school may decide to carry out a 'home visit' to check on the child's welfare and offer any additional support. There will always be two members of school staff to do this.
- Schools have a safeguarding duty under section 175 Education Act 2002 to investigate any unexplained absences.

9. Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised Absences may lead to further statutory involvement from the Local Authority. The decision as to whether this action is required is that of the Local Authority. Should the Local Authority feel that statutory measures are necessary to ensure the regular attendance of a pupil at school they may use a Fixed Penalty Notice. Should a Fixed Penalty Notice be issued; the fine is per parent, per child.

From 19th August 2024, a new national framework for penalty notices will come into force. This framework crosses county borders and applies if parents move school or house. Term time leave is only allowed in exceptional circumstances and must be communicated in advance with evidence to the headteacher.

Fixed Penalty Notices will be considered when absence meets the following triggers:

- 10 sessions, including illness, have been missed in 10 weeks (1 day = 2 sessions)
- 5 consecutive days of term time leave have been taken

All fixed penalty notices are issued directly from the local authority and payments are due to Slough Borough Council as per the letters received.

First Offence:

The first time a penalty notice is issued for unauthorised term time leave or irregular attendance, the amount due will be **£160 per parent, per child**. If paid within 28 days, this reduces to **£80 per parent per child**.

Second Offence:

If a second penalty notice is issued within three years of the first offence, the amount due will be **£160 per parent per child** if paid within 28 days. There is **no reduction for early payment**.

Third Offence onwards:

If a third offence is committed for unauthorised term time leave or irregular attendance, a penalty notice will not be issued. The case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court. Fines are approximated at **£2,500 per parent, per child**. Cases found guilty by in a Magistrates Court can be shown on a criminal record and on a parent's DBS, due to failure to safeguard a child's education.

Planned absences

There may be occasions when a pupil may require a period of absence from school which is planned. Headteachers are only allowed to authorise a period of absence from school if they consider that the absence is for an **exceptional circumstance**. Should a pupil require to be absent from school for a planned period of absence, it is advised that a parent request this in writing and **prior to the leave being taken**. The school will then respond to the parent's request to state whether this absence will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised. Should it be classified as an unauthorised then this is an unauthorised leave of absence. The school may refer to the Local Authority, the details of any pupil who has an unauthorised leave of absence. The Local Authority is responsible for making the decision as to whether Statutory Measures are required, such as a Fixed Penalty Notice as detailed above.

Any request for planned absences for a pupil to participate in a sporting or other educational activity, such as a dance or music exam, should be requested in writing. It would be advisable to

include any documentation to support the application for leave. Once considered by the school, a response will be provided to state whether this absence will be coded as an authorised or unauthorised absence.

There may be occasions when there is a local or national emergency which causes the school to have to partially, or fully, close to pupils. This is for situations such as extreme weather. Should there be an occasion when this happens, parents will be fully informed and the absence will be recorded as a Y code (pupil unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances). This is an administrative code and the session is not counted in the possible attendances.

10. Punctuality

Parents should endeavour to ensure that their child arrives to school on time. Lateness to school not only causes disruption for the pupil, but also for their fellow classmates and the Teacher. Should a pupil arrive late at school, prior to the register closing, then this lateness will be noted but classed as present. If the pupil is late in arrival and the registers have closed, then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and, as per previously mentioned, the Local Authority may use Statutory Measures to ensure the punctual arrival of a pupil to school.

11. Procedure for The Deletion of Pupils' Names from A Register

The attendance register must be an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. A pupil's attendance must be recorded up until the date that the pupils' name is deleted from the admissions register. A pupil can only be deleted from the school register once enrolled in a new setting or if the school has been informed by the Local Authority. Any other reason could constitute off-rolling.

