

Foxfields Academy **Attendance Policy**

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Foxfields Academy and the Governors are committed to providing a full and efficient education of all pupils. Regular attendance is essential to allow children to fully access the curriculum. To this end Foxfields Academy and the Governors will do as much as they can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the Education Act 1996, therefore;

- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure attendance at school as required by law
- Situations may exist beyond the control of parents/carers and pupils which may need to be addressed in partnership by Foxfields Academy and external agencies

Aims

- To create a culture in which good attendance is normal by: ensuring children are only absent due to illness.
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/carers.
- To implement whole school policy on attendance and ensure all staff understand their roles in monitoring and recording attendance.
- To reduce unauthorised absences within the school at all levels.
- To reward good attendance and punctuality in keeping with the rewards system in the school.
- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance and to analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence.

Expectations

Parents/carers and pupils can expect the following from the school:

- Regular, accurate and efficient recording of attendance
- Early contact with parents/carers when a pupil's absence, if no message is received by telephone or no prior notice has been given, this is on a daily basis and is recorded

Foxfields Academy **Attendance Policy**

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Review Date: September 2024

- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to the school
- Encouragement and tailored support to pupils towards good attendance
- Bespoke support plans for pupil's that are unable to access school for reasons such as medical recovery etc

The school has the following expectations from parents/carers:

- That they ensure their child attends school regularly
- That they will contact the school by telephone or in person at the start of the first day of absence; whenever their child is unable to attend school
- They will inform the school of any planned medical appointments in advance and provide evidence of an appointment if necessary
- They will inform the school of any planned medical procedures/circumstances that may result in a child's long-term absence to ensure an appropriate support plan can be established
- That they will ensure their child arrives in school on time and prepared for the school day
- That they will contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- To avoid, where possible, taking any planned absence during term time

The school has the following expectations from pupils:

- That they attend school regularly
- That they arrive at school on time and are appropriately prepared for the day
- That they will inform a member of staff of any problems or reasons that may hinder them from attending school

Responding to Non-Attendance

On the day of the absence, if a telephone call or prior notice has not been received from parents/carers the receptionist will;

- Attempt to contact parents/carers by telephone to obtain an explanation for the absence, this will be logged on the school's electronic recording system (Schoolpod) and monitored
- If parents/carers are non-contactable the pupil's emergency contacts will be contacted to enquire about the absence
- If there is no response by 12.00pm, the Senior Leadership Team/Designated Safeguarding Lead will determine whether it is necessary for a staff member to carry out a home visit on the day of absence
- If a pupil is absent long term a bespoke support programme will be established with the safeguarding and pastoral team, where appropriate, weekly home visits will be made, and a plan will be implemented to support the pupil's reintegration into school

Foxfields Academy **Attendance Policy**

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Review Date: September 2024

- If a pupil is admitted to hospital, the school will liaise with parent/carer and the hospital to determine the appropriate course of action to support the child's recovery, education and reintegration into school

School Organisation

For this policy to be successful every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the pupils the importance of attendance in accessing the quality education being provided. This means staff will arrive to lessons on time and be well prepared.

Specific responsibilities allocated to staff:

Headteacher:

- To oversee the whole policy
- To report to governors
- To liaise with class tutors
- To oversee the operation of the attendance system and the collation of attendance data
- To oversee the work of administration staff
- To report to the Trust when necessary
- To oversee the reintegration process and plan for the return of long-term absences

Class Tutor:

- To complete registers accurately and on time both AM and PM
- To record any reasons for absence in pupil planners on the registers
- To inform the designated safeguarding lead of any concerns

Administration Team:

- Update registers onto School Pod (school's electronic system)
- Note telephone messages and mark in registers accordingly
- Highlight irregular absence and inability to contact parent/carer to Senior Leadership Team/Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Contribute to a chronology of contact regarding attendance issues

Safeguarding and Pastoral Team:

- Make weekly home contact with pupils that are absent from school long term
- Liaise with parents/carers regarding pupil's attendance concerns
- Produce termly letters to all parents/carers stating their child's current attendance
- Produce attendance letters and analysis of attendance figures when required
- Liaise with stakeholders regarding a pupil's attendance concerns
- Keep an up to date folder with all attendance paperwork including intervention/actions and evidence

Foxfields Academy **Attendance Policy**

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Review Date: September 2024

- Liaise with pupil's Local Authority caseworkers regarding any changes to a child's circumstances that may impede their regular school attendance
- Liaise with the Attendance and Inclusion Team and refer to the Education Welfare Service when necessary
- Record a chronology of contact regarding attendance issues

Local School Board

- Local School Board members may be given specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The Department for Education has deemed **pupil's with attendance less than 90% are 'persistent absentees'** and follow up is necessary.

What is an Authorised Absence?

Authorised absence is where approval has been given in advance for a pupil to be away, or the school has accepted an explanation offered as satisfactory reason for absence. All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised. The following may be reasons for authorising absence:

- Illness
- Family bereavement
- Medical or dental appointment
- Days of religious observance
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removal from roll or reinstated

As an organisation we ask that we are informed of any unavoidable absences as soon as possible and we reserve the right to ask for evidence of appointments such as doctor's appointments.

What is an Unauthorised Absence?

Absences are unauthorised when the explanation for an absence is deemed an unsatisfactory or unnecessary reason to be absent from school. Absences will not be authorised under the following circumstances:

- Family holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Shopping trips/birthday outings
- No parent/carer communication
- Lateness; arrival 30 minutes after registration closes without parental explanation

Irregular Attendance/Refusal to Attend

The School and its staff regard the regular attendance of children at school as being vital to each child's education and development. It is for this reason that non-attendances (however short or

Foxfields Academy **Attendance Policy**

Published: September 2023

Review Date: September 2024

infrequent) are treated seriously. It remains the policy of the school to only sanction non-attendance during term time in exceptional circumstances. If a child's attendance falls below 85% a letter will be sent to parents/carers informing them of this. The child's attendance will also be discussed between the designated safeguarding lead, the parents/carers and the child, if appropriate, and short-term attendance targets will be set for the child to achieve. The child's attendance will continue to be monitored and if the attendance continues to fall, or sufficient progress is not made against the short-term attendance targets, consideration will be made to refer the child to the Education Welfare Service.

Parents/carers of pupils of compulsory school age are responsible for making sure their child receives a full-time education and can be prosecuted for Irregular attendance under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1). Where a child has not attended regularly at school or has unauthorised leave of absence you may either be issued with a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child (discounted to £60 if paid within 21 days), or, your case could be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court for the purposes of a criminal prosecution.

The Local Authority will be informed where a child has not attended for 10 consecutive school days without provision of a reasonable explanation.

As a school we endeavour to support all of our pupils to attend school every day, we therefore ask that parents/carers act upon any concerns they have regarding their child's attendance and contact the school at the earliest opportunity to prevent any attendance issue worsening.

The Local Authority's guidance for school attendance and details on Fixed Penalty Notices can be located as: <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/child-protection-and-safeguarding/school-attendance>

Reintegration

The return to school for a pupil after a long-term absence requires special planning therefore support programmes will be tailored to the pupil's individual needs and may involve phased or part time re-entry with support in lessons and/or at home as appropriate.

Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have removed the reference of holidays during term time and now provides that a leave of absence during term time will only be granted where an application is made in advance to the school and the school consider that the leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances relating to that application. The onus is on the parent/carer to present the case in writing at least two weeks before the event. Retrospective granting of permission, should only therefore be on rare occasions.

Therefore parents/carers of Foxfields Academy who are requesting time off during term time need to **complete a 'Request for Pupil Absence During Term Time Form' detailing their exceptional circumstances for the absence**. Educational benefits will be considered; however, reasons purely based on financial circumstances cannot. The form needs to be submitted to the school **two weeks in advance** and the Senior Leadership Team, according to the child's needs,

will review these requests on individual basis. If a leave of absence goes on longer than the agreed duration, the extra days will be unauthorised.

Removal from Roll

The school will only remove pupils from roll when this has been agreed by the local authority. In the instance a change of school placement is required an emergency review will be held with parents/carers to change the named school on the pupils Educational Health Care Plan. Parents/carers moving out of the area are required to inform their child's Local Authority caseworker of this as the earliest opportunity, and inform school in writing detailing their new address, proposed last day in school, new school, if a placement has been found, and potential schools if a placement has not been confirmed, this can be done by completing a 'Notification of Pupil Leaving School' form held in reception.

Elective Home Education

Whilst the local authority encourages parents/carers to enrol their child at school, they also recognise that parents/carers have an equal right to educate their child at home. The local authority wishes to work with parents/carers who home educate in order to ensure that those children are provided with efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs which they might have. It also wishes to ensure that parents/carers who choose to electively home educate their children, do so for the right reasons and have an intention to educate at home from the point they remove their child from school.

If parents/carers have a desire to home education their child the headteacher must be informed of this in writing and parents/carers must inform Leicestershire County Council Special Educational Needs Assessment Service – you will be unable to take your child out of school without the agreement of SEN service as Foxfields Academy is a special school provision. A child can only be removed from roll on the grounds of Elective Home Education when this has been agreed by the local authority.

More information regarding Elective home education within Leicestershire County Council can be found at: <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/education-and-childcare/home-education>

Children Missing Education

Arrangements for identifying and maintaining contact with children missing, or at risk of going missing, from education are paramount.

The national definition of children who are not receiving a suitable education is:

Children of compulsory school age, who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more) and who is not receiving a

Foxfields Academy **Attendance Policy**

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Review Date: September 2024

suitable education (i.e. deemed to be 'efficient full-time' education that is suitable to her/his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have).

Our school recognises the entitlement that all children have to education and will work closely with the local authority to share information about pupils who may be missing out on full time education or who go missing from education. The local authority will also be informed where children are to be removed from the school register a) to be educated outside the school system; b) for medical reasons; c) because they have ceased to attend; d) because they are in custody; d) because they have been permanently excluded. We also recognise that children who go missing is a sign that they may have been targeted by Child Sexual Exploitation perpetrators and/or drug related criminals (County Lines). Children may also be groomed into participating in other forms of criminal exploitation including cybercrime, serious violence and violent crime. All cases of children missing education will be reported to Leicestershire County Council.

Rewards for good attendance

We understand the impact good attendance and punctuality has on our children's learning and we believe in rewarding pupils for their efforts. There is a weekly prize draw for pupils have achieved 100% attendance for the whole week. This is completed in both lower school and upper school assembly on a Friday. In addition to this, certificates are handed out for 100% termly attendance and 100% yearly attendance.

Interesting fact: 'if a pupil was absent from school for two weeks every year from their reception year to 18 years of age, they would miss the equivalent of one whole year's school education'.