



Falconbrook Primary School

Attendance Policy

Updated July 2024

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Promoting good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- › Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- › Attendance data is discussed at with all governors at Full Governing Board meetings.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance: (works in liaison with Education Welfare Services EWO)

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Headteacher and can be contacted via the school office on 0207 228 7706 or admin@falconbrook.net

3.4 The attendance officer (Admin)

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring all class registers daily and ensuring these are accurately completed and on time – taking remedial action when errors are observed (checking presence of child / register not completed by required completion time – see below)
- › Checking attendance of all children on vulnerable list and informing SLT of absence of any as matter of urgency and by 10am each day at latest.
- › Daily calls home to check on the whereabouts and safety of child why absence has not been explained by parent / main carer.
- › Alerting SLT of all unexplained absences daily
 - Calling all emergency contacts for child in event of no contact with parents / carer & no reason for absence given
 - Updating SIMS with reasons for lateness and absence on daily basis
 - The attendance officer can be contacted by phone on 0207 228 7706 or by email admin@falconbrook.net

3.5 Class teachers (& TST covering classes)

Class teachers (& TST when covering classes) are responsible for recording attendance (SIMS) on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Registers completion times

Morning registers:

- All classes by 9.15am

Afternoon registers:

- EYFS: 1pm
- KS1: 1.15pm
- LKS2: 1.45pm
- UKS2: 2pm

3.6 School admin team

School admin will:

- › Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system (SIMS)
- › Inform the attendance officer (or Headteacher in their absence) on a day-to-day basis of absence calls received that require further communication and may be of concern.
- › In the absence of the attendance officer identify any unexplained pupil absences and communicate these to the Headteacher

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day and that they arrive on time
- › Make sure their child is collected on time at the end of the school day.
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and each following day of absence, and inform school when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school with 4 emergency contact numbers for their child
- › Ensure that appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not, for all children of compulsory school age (5 years and above)
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school between 8.45am -8.55am on each school day. Gates are locked at 8.55am.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.15am when all class registers must be completed

The class register for the afternoon session is taken immediately after the lunchtime break

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by:

Calling the school office on 0207 228 7706 and then pressing 1 to leave a voice message

Please state your child's name, their class and the reason for their absence.

(See also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Appointments with the GP or dentist or optician should be made outside of the school day.

However, in an emergency attending a medical or dental appointment may be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment, and provides evidence of the appointment (letter, text message or email).

Pre-arranged hospital appointments may be authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment, and provides evidence of the appointment (letter, text message or email).

If attending an appointment during the school day the child should attend school before the appointment time and / or return to school after their appointment.

Planned absence from school for medical reasons:

Parent / carers should inform the school office of child's planned absence from school for a medical reason. This should be done in advance of the appointment.

Parents will need to give a copy of any of the following too:

- Letter or email from hospital confirming child's appointment
- Text from GP or dentist confirming child's appointment. Reason for the appointment.
- Email GP or dentist confirming appointment. Reason for the appointment.

Copies will be taken of the above and kept in child's file.

A record is kept of these appointments, including the time child has missed from school.

The following reasons for absence will not be authorised:

- Attending a non-urgent GP appointment during school time.
- Being absent to attend an appointment with someone else.
- Missing a flight back to UK following a holiday.
- Other reasons that may be given for the child's absence that are not urgent or exceptional.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Registers are taken between 8:55 and 9:00am.

- Students who arrive between 9:15am and 10:00am will be marked late.
- Any late arrivals after 10:00am, without relevant supporting evidence will be marked as an unauthorised absence using the U code.
- If a pupil is repeatedly arriving late to school this may result in correspondence from the school or the school's allocated Education Welfare Officer with an aim with of putting targets and support in place to make the required improvements.
- If improvements are not made the school will seek advice for Education Welfare Service at Wandsworth LA.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

When any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police and / or Children's Social Services (CSS) and / or Education Welfare Services (EWS)
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

- › Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- › Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- › Inform the Headteacher of any unexplained absences each day in order for safeguarding check to be carried out as necessary

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at termly parent teacher meetings, and in the child's end of year school report.

We expect a child's attendance to be 96.5% overall.

If a child's attendance begins to slip and moves towards 90% parents are contacted and may be invited to attend a meeting to discuss possible reasons for the drop in attendance and ways to improve this.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time / special leave of absence

The Headteacher will only grant a special leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A special leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. The Special Leave Request form is available from the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. All authorised leave of absences will be provided at the discretion of the Headteacher irrespective of supporting evidence being submitted with your request.

All absences two weeks prior to the end of a school term will be recorded as unauthorised. If your child fails to return to school at the start of a new term, their absences for those sessions will also be recorded as unauthorised. Where relevant evidence is provided, this will be considered by the school. All authorised absences are at the Headteacher's discretion.

When considering a request for special leave the Headteacher will also take into account the following:

- The child's previous attendance
- The child's current learning and progress.
- The child's ability to catch up on any work missed
- Any tests, exams, or significant school events
- The frequency of any other requests for leave.

Applying for a special leave of absence.

A request form to apply for a special leave of absence for children may be collected from the school office. This form should be completed fully.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school and local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80, which will increase to £160 if unpaid within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- › The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- › One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- › Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

The local authority may refer persistent / severe absence to Court – this can result in prosecution / Court action being taken.

It is a parent's legal duty to ensure that their child receives a suitable full time education when they are of compulsory school age. Failure to ensure that your child receives a suitable full-time education is a criminal offence under section 444 of The Education Act 1996.

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- › Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- › Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence (The school works in liaison with Wandsworth Education Welfare Service EWO)

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Inform parent informally or by letter when attendance concerns emerge.
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- › Agree a support plan with families to improve attendance over a given period.
- › Refer families to the LA Education Welfare Service where support plans implemented and agreed with families to improve poor attendance, have not been carried out or supported by parent.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher, in liaison with the Attendance Officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › Behaviour Management policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day