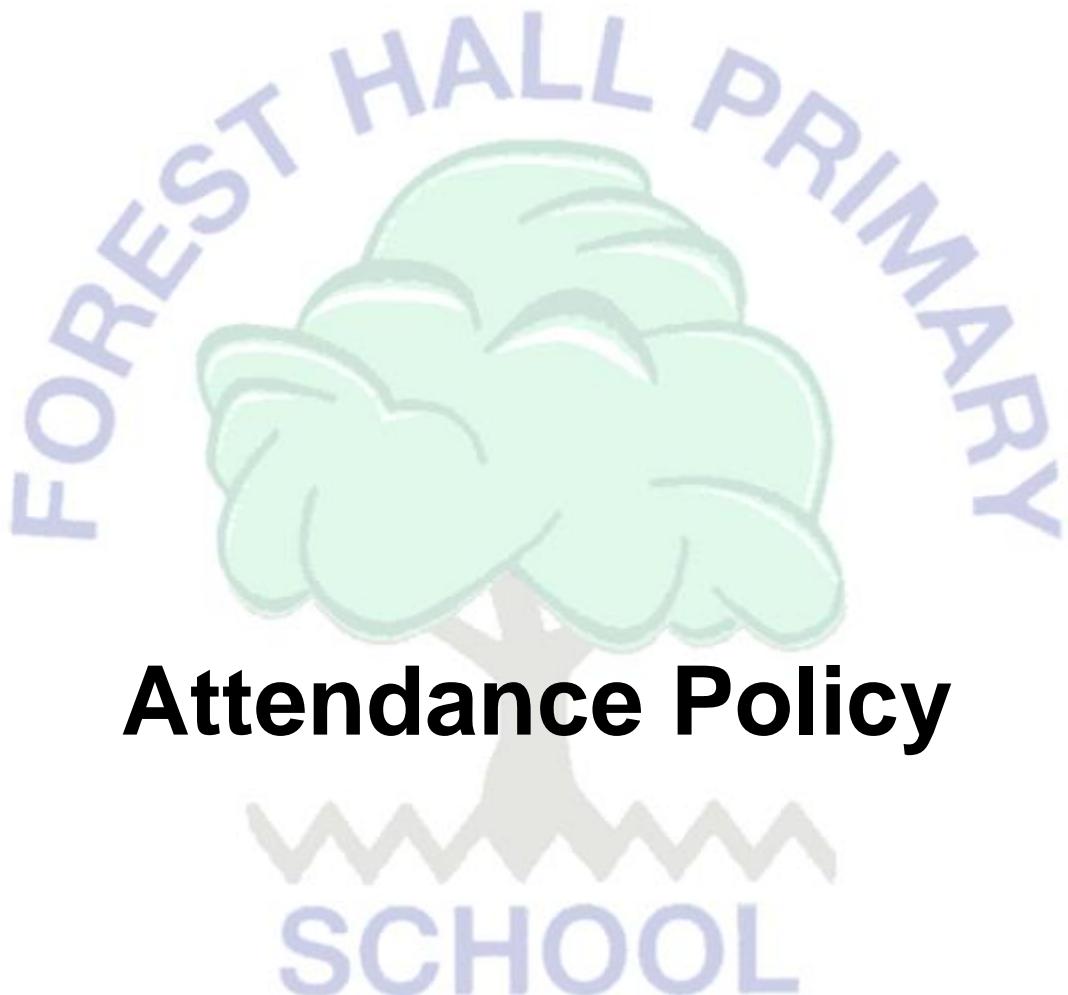


# Forest Hall Primary School



## Attendance Policy

| Version | Date           | Review         |
|---------|----------------|----------------|
| 1.0     | July 2019      | September 2021 |
| 1.1     | October 2021   | October 2023   |
| 1.2     | September 2024 | September 2026 |

# Forest Hall Primary School

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Introduction

At Forest Hall Primary School we are committed to providing high quality education for all of our children so they can achieve their personal best across all areas of learning. Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to successfully developing the understanding, knowledge and skills needed for the next stage in learning.

Good attendance is a learned behaviour so we actively promote regular and punctual attendance from Early Years onwards so that our families develop good attendance habits. We know that frequent absences from school impact on children's happiness in school, their friendships and sense of belonging as well as their educational progress.

Whilst school actively encourages all children to attend school punctually every day, we know that families can oversleep. All staff tell the children that they can **never** be too late for school. We would rather children came to school mid-morning or later than missed an entire day of teaching and learning and they will not be chastised for being late.

We also know that at times children are too unwell for school or families can experience circumstances which result in absence from school.

At Forest Hall, as part of our commitment to encouraging high standards of attendance and punctuality, we regularly monitor attendance and punctuality in working with parents to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems which prevent this are identified and addressed quickly.

### Statement of Intent



**All pupils at Forest Hall Primary School should aim to be in school every day and on time to fully benefit from teaching and learning opportunities available to them and so improve their outcomes across all areas of learning.**

### Aims

- To encourage children to attend school every day and be on time.
- For parents to understand the benefit of regular attendance on their children's education.
- For school to know why a child is absent from school.
- To identify frequent absences / emerging patterns and work with families to improve attendance.

### 1. Expectations and Responsibilities

#### Pupils

- It is part of our school culture that all pupils at Forest Hall understand how important it is for them to come to school every day to develop their knowledge and skills.
- *KS2 pupils are encouraged to be responsible for organising their bags and equipment in readiness for school.*

## Parents

**Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school every day and on time (8.45am). Under the 1996 Education Act parents may be prosecuted if they fail to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually.**

**Parents are responsible for getting their child to school in uniform, on time, with the kit/equipment needed for that day.**

### **They must**

- Explain lateness and/or any period of absence to school ASAP.
- Request permission from the headteacher to remove their child from school in term time following instructions laid out in this policy.
- Know that holidays in term time will be unauthorised except in 'exceptional circumstances.'
- Keep requests for absence to a minimum and take family holidays during school holidays.
- Work with school to reduce lateness and improve attendance if required
- Support their child to fully benefit from teaching and learning offered and so make sound progress

### **Headteacher and Senior Attendance Champion**

- To effectively communicate the attendance procedure and expectations of Forest Hall Primary School to pupils and their parents.
- To encourage good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- To act promptly to address emerging patterns of absence.
- To work with parents and the Attendance and Placement Service to overcome barriers to attendance when necessary.

### **Governing Body**

- To promote the well-being of all pupils in school; this includes regular and punctual attendance at school.
- To be aware of attendance data and strategies to reduce absence as reported by the headteacher in termly reports. [Individual pupils will not be named.]

### **Attendance Admin Officer**

- To follow absence procedures as explained in this document, contacting parents, logging actions and explanations.
- To liaise with the headteacher for authorisation of absence.
- To monitor attendance and report weekly to the headteacher.

### **The Local Authority**

**The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children and to provide support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The Attendance and Placement Service is the enforcement agency of the Local Authority and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may take action upon parents not fulfilling their duty under the Education Act 1996.**

- The Local Authority (LA) has a duty to know that children are in the school system or receiving education otherwise.

- If the LA understands that a child is not receiving a suitable education either by regular attendance at a school or otherwise ( eg at home) it has a duty under section 437 of the Education Act 1996 to serve a notice or a school attendance order on a parent. The notice requires the parent to satisfy the LA that the child is receiving a suitable education while the order requires the parent to register the child at a named school.
- The LA also has responsibility under sections 444, 444A and 444ZA of the Education Act 1996 for legal action to enforce attendance at school. This duty would be exercised through The Attendance and Placement Service. They also have the following legal powers to enforce attendance:
  - School Attendance Orders
  - Prosecution in Magistrates Court (for irregular attendance)
  - Penalty Notices ( for irregular attendance & term time holidays)
  - Education Supervision Orders.

**The Penalty Notice is a fine of £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £160 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings**

## 2. School Process for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

***The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions.***

***The attendance register must be taken at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. On each occasion school must record whether each registered pupil is physically present in school or if not the reason why. This is done using national attendance and absence codes.***

- The school day starts at **8.45 am** and the gate opens at **8.35am**. Children should arrive in time for the bell but unaccompanied Y6 pupils should not be in street before this time for their own safety.
- The morning register is taken by **8.55am** and the afternoon register at **1.05 pm**. Registers close at **9 am** in the morning and **1.15 pm** in the afternoon.
- Registers are marked electronically in class and latecomers added by the attendance officer at the school office.
- Children who are late arriving at school should go to the school office (with their parent if escorted to school,) where they will be recorded as being on school premises but late. Their parent should explain why they are late. (*Children do not get into trouble for being late.*)
- Parents are expected to contact school by 9.30am to explain why their child is not attending school that day as unexplained absences. This can be by phone, email, written message or calling in person to the school office.
- The attendance officer logs messages in the class attendance logs so class teachers know why children are absent.
- If there is no explanation for a child's absence, the attendance officer will ring the prime parent and leave a message if no-one picks up. She logs the date and time of the call.

- The attendance officer flags up frequent absence or emerging patterns with the headteacher. She monitors the attendance of amber and red rated children on a daily basis. Staff also raise concerns regarding pupils' attendance and punctuality with the headteacher.
- The headteacher will contact parents to discuss attendance/punctuality and work with them to improve their child's attendance/punctuality.
- Parents receive a slip at the end of each term with their child's attendance percentage and rating for that term.
- If attendance issues are not resolved school will involve the Attendance and Placement Team and may also involve the Early Help Team in working with the family to improve school attendance.

### 3. Absence from School

**Every pupil has a right to a full-time education and school sets high attendance expectations for all pupils but there are times when a pupil is absent from school. A reason for the absence must always be given to school and will be recorded using the relevant code.**

#### i) Absence from school due to illness

- Parents **must** contact school by 9.30am on the first day of absence to explain why their child is not attending nursery or school.
- A voicemail message may be left on 0191 300 9341, clearly stating the reason for absence and when the pupil is likely to return. '*Unwell*' or '*poorly*' are *not sufficient explanations*. Parents (or their representatives,) can call at the office to explain the absence. Details given are logged by the attendance officer.

#### ii) Dental/medical appointments

Parents/ carers must either provide written details (eg letter from hospital/ clinic) or call at the school office with written details of any medical/ dental appointments. This could be a text message on a phone. It is best where possible to make appointments outside of the school day or avoid term time altogether.

*Pupils are encouraged to attend school before and after appointments on school days.*

#### iii) Unexplained absence

If a child has been absent from school and the parent has not contacted school to explain why their child has been absent, this is marked as unauthorised.

### 4. Exceptional Circumstances

The DfE states that all schools may grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at the headteacher's discretion. Schools must consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

At Forest Hall Primary School '**exceptional circumstances**' may include;

1. Exceptional circumstances (eg a one off event) unique to the family.
2. To attend the wedding of a close relative.
3. Family bereavement

4. Religious observance
5. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

Parents are required to give evidence to support their circumstances in making a case for permission.

Leave will never be permitted regardless of circumstance at the following times during the school calendar:

- The second week in June for Y1 pupils - Phonic Screening Check week
- Y6 SAT week – usually second full week in May

## 5. Requests for Leave of Absence

Parents must request permission from the headteacher for leave of absence during term time, fully explaining the reason for the request. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis by the headteacher. Forms can be downloaded from the web site and paper copies are available on request from the office.

***'Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.'***  
[DfE Working together to improve school attendance 2024]

1. The parent sends a completed request form to the headteacher at least 2 weeks in advance.
2. The headteacher will reply to the request in writing stating whether the request has been authorised or is unauthorised and why.
3. If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated including the date the child is expected back in school.

**If a parent takes their child on holiday without requesting leave of absence from the headteacher, a referral will be made to the LA requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.**

**A Penalty Notice is a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £160 if the notice is paid after 21 days but within 28 days.**

**If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies.**

**Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.**

## 6. Punctuality

Parents/carers of pupils who are repeatedly late will be contacted by school staff to discover the reason for persistent lateness. If lateness continues, a meeting will be arranged with the headteacher to discuss how punctuality can be improved.

***Those parents/carers sending children to school to arrive after 8.45 am **MUST** bring them in person to the school door to explain the reason for lateness or contact school, not leaving the explanation to be made by the child.***

Children with 6 lates over a 4 week period will receive a letter home and be monitored by school if there is no improvement.

**Arriving at 9 am = 15 minutes late = missing Time to Talk and the start of the Maths Mash-up (maths number facts) or speed sound recognition in Y1!**

## **7. Reporting attendance to parents/carers**

The school day is broken into 2 sessions, morning and afternoon when the register is called and attendance logged. The annual report to parents states attendance based on 2 sessions per day from the school day after the last report was issued or the date of starting school for new pupils. The percentage of unauthorised absence is also shown.

Parents receive a slip with their child's attendance each term so that they are aware of cumulative absence percentages.

- At progress evenings teachers will share attendance data with parents/carers.
- Parents of red rated children will receive a letter requesting them to attend a meeting with the headteacher to discuss how school can help them to improve their child's attendance.

If a red rated pupil's attendance does not improve over the period of time allocated or the parent fails to meet with the head teacher to discuss attendance, then school will ask the Attendance and Placement Service to become involved. Should the child's attendance still fail to improve then the LA will start legal proceedings.

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>96-100%</b>       | Green rated: expected attendance with no cause for concern   |
| <b>91-95%</b>        | Amber rated: at risk of persistent absence, monitored weekly |
| <b>90% and below</b> | Red rated: persistent absentee, monitored daily              |

## **8. Attendance Rewards at Forest Hall Primary School**

**School uses a range of different strategies to motivate the children to attend school every day and on time. Some are short term incentives and others run throughout the year.**

*'Doing the right thing brings rewards at Forest Hall.'*

- Regular attendance is encouraged through the class of the week scheme when the class with the best attendance is awarded the cup in assembly. There is a chart mapping this in the hall.
- Punctuality is monitored and rewarded in assembly on Fridays. The class with the fewest lates is awarded the White Rabbit and there is a chart mapping this in the hall too.
- Pupils with 100% attendance that week have their name entered into the class draw. The winner receives a small prize.
- Pupils receive a daily point for being in school and well behaved. Five daily points convert into 1 tree point. Tree points can be spent at the tree point shop half termly.
- Pupils achieving 100% attendance for a term are awarded with a certificate. Those achieving 100% attendance over the school year receive a certificate and can choose an item from the tree point shop.

*The School Council has been consulted about incentives to promote attendance.*

## **General Data Protection regulations (GDPR) 2018**

In line with GDPR this information will be used within school, by the LA and by the DfE and their agents. The school has robust processes in place to ensure the confidentiality and all documentation and information will be kept securely in line with our Data Protection Policy. The information will be shredded after 3 academic years from the date it was processed.

### **Review**

This policy replaces the Attendance Policy, October 2021, and will be reviewed every 2 years or earlier if recommended by LA and or DfE guidance.

CM Parker  
Headteacher  
September 2024



# Forest Hall Primary School



## REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

|                 |  |            |  |
|-----------------|--|------------|--|
| Name of pupil   |  |            |  |
| Date of birth   |  |            |  |
| Class           |  | Year group |  |
| Address         |  |            |  |
| Contact numbers |  |            |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>I request permission for my child to be absent from school between:</b>  |  |
| First day of absence  |  |
| Date of return to school  |  |
| Total school days   |  |
| Please fully explain the <b>exceptional circumstances</b> that you would like the Headteacher, Ms Parker, to consider. (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.) |  |

### Declaration (*Please read Appendix A or the notes on the back of this form*)

*I have read and understood the information about leave of absence during term time, unauthorised absence, and Penalty Notices. I am aware of the possible consequences should my child take a leave of absence without the prior authorisation of the Head teacher.*

Signature..... Date.....

Please Print: .....

## Appendix A

### Important information for Parents

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason. Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results.

Parents are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure their child attends school regularly. There is no automatic right to take a child out of school during term time but the law allows Head teachers to consider individual requests to authorise a leave of absence **in exceptional circumstances**.

The Head teacher must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances justify an authorised absence and it is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information and evidence in order to establish this fact.

The request for an authorised leave of absence must be made in advance and the Head teacher may invite the parent into school to discuss the request before a decision is made.

If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the Head teacher, the expectation is that child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior to and after the date covered by the request.

If the request for a leave of absence is refused and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the Head teacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued against you.

**A Penalty Notice is a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £160 if the notice is paid after 21 days but within 28 days.**

**If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies.**

**Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.**