

THE FOREST SCHOOL

POLICY TITLE	Attendance and Punctuality
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY	Assistant Head Attendance

WHO IS GOVERNED BY THIS POLICY

Pupils, Parents or Carer

POINT (S) OF CONTACT

SLT, Community Leaders, EWO, Attendance Officer, APC and Form Tutor

LINKS TO THE FOLLOWING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Safer Recruiting, Child Protection, Health and Safety, Behaviour and Inclusion, Disability Equality Scheme, Diversity and Equality Policy

MAIN ECM OUTCOMES (EVERY CHILD MATTERS)

Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution, Achieve Economic Well-being

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Forest School is determined to see all pupils achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

We have created an ethos in our school where it is expected that all pupils attend school regularly, and where time from school is lost only through genuine illness or other unavoidable causes.

We are developing a partnership between pupils, staff and parents / carers which quickly identifies absence and supports pupils in achieving full attendance.

Our belief is that we can do this by two distinct strategies.

1. By paying close attention to detail to emphasise that we are a school:
 - which is welcoming, safe and aware of the needs of the individual
 - having clear well thought out strategies to diagnose and support individual problems
 - where lessons are interesting and differentiated and pupils are given plenty of attention and support
 - where relationships with clear boundaries and trust are built up between staff and pupils
 - where pupils feel valued and their opinions are heard

- where there is a wide range of enrichment programmes through which pupils can develop their interests and work with staff in an informal manner
 - where achievement and effort is valued
 - where good attendance is recognised and rewarded.
2. By quickly identifying absences and putting in place strategies
- to improve attendance and punctuality
 - which work closely with parents / carers

This policy will set out the following:

- Legislation
- Procedures
- Roles and Responsibilities

LEGISLATION

The Education Act of 1996 sets out the law with respect to school attendance:

- The parent / carer is responsible for making sure that their child receives full-time education.
- If a child registered at a school fails to attend regularly then the parent / carer is guilty of an offence.
- Schools must maintain an accurate register of attendance and hold records for 3 years.

PROCEDURES

All staff (teaching and associate) have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

COLLECTION OF DATA

Registration is completed electronically via SIMS Lesson Monitor at the start of every lesson.

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice every day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers via SIMS Lesson Monitor.

Morning

The register will be called promptly at 8.30am by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child. The registers will close at 8.35am. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will count as late.

Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as present but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see paragraph 2.6)

Any pupils arriving to their lesson after the register has been taken will also have their Consequences card signed.

Afternoon

A warning bell rings at 1.50pm to inform pupils to vacate the field or any extra curricular provision in which they are partaking. Registration is completed electronically by all teaching staff at 2.00pm and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

The registers will close at 2.05pm. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will count as late. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as present but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see paragraph 2.6)

Any pupils arriving to their lesson after the register has been taken will also have their Consequences card signed.

During the School Day

During each lesson, teaching staff will complete their own class register via SIMS Lesson Monitor.

Lesson #	Register Taken	Register Closes
Lesson 2	9.30am	9.35am
Lesson 3	11.20am	11.25am
Lesson 4	12.20pm	12.25pm

The registers will close five minutes after the start of the lesson. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will count as late, with the number of minutes late being recorded via SIMS Lesson Monitor.

Pupils arriving late to the lesson with an authorised absent (e.g. music lesson, staff withdrawal) will be over-written and amended as present.

Any pupils arriving to their lesson after the register has been taken will also have their Consequences card signed.

USE OF DATA

The prompt and efficient collection of data is essential to allow effective action to be taken by the year head, tutor team and the attendance officer.

Actions will include:

- Monitoring individual absence and patterns of absence
- Identifying and tackling patterns in unauthorised absence
- Identifying and tackling patterns within year groups
- Identifying and tackling any other patterns including in-school lateness

TYPES OF ABSENCE

The school will decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absences are sessions away from school for a valid reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted.

This can include:

- Parent / carer keeping pupils off school unnecessarily
- Truancy (including during the school day)
- Unexplained absences
- Holidays (see paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5)

TERM-TIME HOLIDAYS

Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

The Forest School will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays is not a right. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended holiday.

We will consider authorising holidays for:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- Parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- Cheaper cost of holiday
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods

- Overlap with beginning or end of term.

We will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

We will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests.

We will NOT authorise absence for Key Stage 4 pupils.

EXTENDED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

In considering absence for extended trips overseas, The Forest School will take account of the following:

- A visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday'
- Such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up
- Parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their son's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip)
- The reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved
- Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

FOLLOW UP

There is a range of situations where the school will respond:

- Unauthorised or unexplained absence
- A pattern of absence, with parent/carer consent, over a number of weeks
- Persistent lateness
- Unexplained absence from specific lessons during the school day

The attendance officer will telephone all of the parents / carers of absent pupils for whom that day is the first day of absence.

A record is kept of these calls and the school register is amended accordingly. Unsatisfactory outcomes are passed to the Community Leaders for further action.

SEEKING AUTHORISATION FOR ABSENCE

Ideally parents / carers should telephone the attendance officer to confirm the reason for absence. A record will be kept of these calls.

Alternatively, the parent / carer should write a note which the pupil delivers to the attendance officer. The note should include the name of the pupil, their form, the dates of absence covered and the reason for absence.

Where doubts exist regarding the phone call/letter the attendance officer will telephone the parent / carer.

ATTENDANCE REPORTS

Each day the attendance officer will prepare a tutor attendance report for each tutor group and email them on to the appropriate Community Leader. In addition the Community Leader and their Link SLT will also receive a weekly report.

For each tutor group this will look at the previous school week and include:

- Total overall percentage attendance for the year to date
- Individual lates for the previous week
- Total individual lates to date
- Details of any outstanding unauthorised absences

The Community Leader passes these reports to tutors every Tuesday via e-mail. The tutors then use form time on Tuesday and Wednesday to pursue matters with their form and annotates their tutor attendance report.

The Community Leader collects these annotated tutor attendance reports via pigeon holes, reviews them and passes them on immediately to the attendance officer for action.

Each Wednesday the attendance officer prepares a community attendance report for the previous school week for the Community and Link SLT. Each Community Leader will discuss this report with their Link SLT in their fortnightly line management meeting and jointly decide what action to take.

For each community this includes:

- Number on role
- Details of extended holidays
- New leavers/joiners
- Overall attendance for the year to date
- Attendance for the week
- Individual outstanding unauthorised absences
- EWO referrals
- By form, individual ranked overall attendance figures
- Details of anyone excluded

LATES REPORT (SCHOOL DAY)

Each Monday the attendance officer prepares a list of pupils who had 3 or more 'lates' the previous week and passes this to the Academic Progress Coordinators (APCs).

The APC checks the list immediately and returns it to the attendance officer so that detention stickers can be posted for detentions via the pupil's tutor. The detention will be held during the following Wednesday lunch break (1.30pm – 1.55pm).

Persistent lateness will be dealt with through the following sanctions:

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|-----------|--|
| Level 1 | 3 lates per week - APC Detention |
| Level 2 | 3 lates (or more) on more than one occasion during any Half Term period – SLT Detention; Punctuality letter sent to parents |
| Level 3 - | 3 lates (or more) on more than two occasion during any Half Term period – SLT Detention; Punctuality letter sent to parents with follow up meeting with Community Leader; Referral (if AM lateness) to Educational Welfare Officer |

Pupils will start again from zero each Half Term

CHRONIC POOR ATTENDANCE / PUNCTUALITY

Chronic poor attendance and punctuality will be reviewed at the scheduled Intervention meetings between Community Leaders and APCs.

If a pupil's attendance or punctuality falls below 85%, a letter will be sent to the parent informing them of their son's status, and that an EWO Referral will be likely to follow in the event of no improvement.

Pupils that fall into this category will be monitored via the Line Management process with the Link SLT, with a meeting with the parent/carer to identify an action plan and attendance monitoring programme if no improvement has been made.

This plan will be monitored by the Community Leader. In some cases the Director of Inclusion or a member of SLT may be part of this process.

This might include individual timetables for pupils in Year 11 to ensure they have the opportunity to achieve 5 or more good GCSEs (including English and Mathematics).

Where no significant improvement is achieved the Community Leader will make a referral to the education welfare officer and to their SLT line manager. In some circumstances a referral may be made immediately.

The Community Leaders meet with the Education Welfare Officer regularly. Attendance matters are scrutinised.

REINTEGRATION

For a long-term absentee to return to school the Community Leader, parent / carer and pupil must meet to draw up a reintegration plan to ensure success.

This may include a reduced timetable in the first instance and, possibly, additional support. All staff who teach the pupil are given advance notice of the return and will support the reintegration.

Curriculum Areas will support returning pupils to enable them to re-connect with their learning.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

At half-termly intervals throughout the academic year, SLT will monitor lateness at the start of the school day, with pupils being recorded as late, being cross referenced against tutor attendance reports. Follow up actions being taken where appropriate by SLT.

NEW PUPILS

It is the responsibility of the Community Leader to ensure that new pupils and their parents / carers understand the attendance and punctuality procedures. This is reinforced by the form tutor.

PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

At the start of each school year a letter is sent to all parent / carers from the Head Teacher summarising the school targets and procedures for attendance and punctuality. This is further reinforced through the Head Teacher's Newsletter throughout the academic year. Guidance is also available on the school website.

At each Academic Review Day, a report is provided for the parent / carer summarising attendance and punctuality for their son to date throughout the academic year. This is discussed as part of the 'consistent conversation during the meeting.

Assemblies and tutor time are used to reinforce the importance of good attendance. Displays and posters are prominent in tutor rooms.

All pupils who achieve 100% attendance throughout a term receive recognition of their achievement through a certificate at their termly 'Praise Assembly'.

A Head Teacher's award (certificate) is made to any pupil achieving 100% attendance throughout an academic year, and a Governors' award (certificate) to any pupil achieving 100% attendance throughout a key stage.

Other measures in place to promote good attendance include:

- A well developed liaison with feeder schools which includes emphasis on the importance of good attendance
- Sports clubs at lunchtime and after school every day
- Attendance spot checks during lessons
- The use of flexible timetables, particularly in Key Stage 4, included work-related programmes
- The use of learning mentors with year 11 pupils at risk of underachieving in external examinations.

PART DAY ATTENDANCE

Medical appointments and other reasons can cause pupils to miss part of a session.

If a pupil needs to leave school during the day the parent / carer should write to the attendance officer to explain the reason. Letters which are unclear will be followed up with a telephone call.

If a parent / carer needs to contact school regarding their child leaving school they must telephone the attendance officer.

Pupils due to leave site during the day for such reasons must report to the attendance officer who will prepare any permission slips. Pupils returning during a session should report directly to the attendance officer before joining lessons. The attendance officer will issue a note which the pupil must pass to the class teacher in the lesson they join.

Where pupils are taken ill the office will obtain SLT permission to contact the parent / carer to send pupils home. The attendance officer will be notified. The attendance officer is not responsible for the welfare or management of pupils who are unwell.

PATTERNS IN ABSENCE

The attendance officer will identify any patterns in absence or lateness.

Tutors and the Community Leaders should also be alert to patterns in absence and inform the attendance officer of any concerns. The Community Leaders will investigate such cases (with the administrative support of the attendance officer) and involve the Community Leaders as necessary.

INCOMPLETE RECORDS

It is the responsibility of all staff (see Data Collection) to ensure the electronic registration is completed promptly and accurately during all lessons. The attendance officer will pursue any staff who fail to do this.

Where problems persist the attendance officer will inform the Link SLT for further action.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Pupils

- To be aware of the importance of regular school attendance
- To attend all lessons on time
- To notify their form tutor or Community Leader if there are any issues preventing them from attending school regularly

Parent / carer

- To ensure their son attends school regularly and punctually
- To ensure that the attendance officer is notified promptly of any absence
- To work with staff, where necessary, to establish strategies for improvement

Form Tutor

- To promote the importance of good attendance
- To use the tutor attendance report to pursue unauthorised absence and to help identify patterns of absence
- To notify the attendance officer / Community Leader of any causes for concern
- To support the reintegration of pupils who have been long term absent

Academic Progress Coordinator

- To promote the importance of good attendance
- To ensure that form tutors give attendance high profile
- To monitor pupil punctuality throughout the school day
- To monitor attendance using the tutor attendance and year attendance reports
- To support Community Leaders when appropriate in interviewing pupils / parents / carers regarding unsatisfactory attendance and / or punctuality and agree improvement strategies or, where necessary, a reintegration programme
- To facilitate the distribution of tutor attendance reports between key stakeholders
- To manage information regarding lates and process detentions for lateness
- To liaise with Community Leaders and Link SLT in coordinate Level 2 and Level 3 pupil lateness

Community Leader

- To promote the importance of good attendance
- To ensure that form tutors give attendance high profile
- To make attendance a regular feature of Community assemblies. To monitor attendance using the tutor attendance and year attendance reports
- To meet with tutors during Monday pastoral briefing to discuss attendance matters.
- To pursue unauthorised attendances
- To interview pupils/parents/carers regarding unsatisfactory attendance and/or punctuality and agree improvement strategies or, where necessary, a reintegration programme
- To implement a recognition and reward programme as per this policy
- To induct new tutors regarding their role and responsibility
- To liaise with the EWO and their SLT line manager regarding pupils causing concern

Attendance Officer

- To promote the importance of good attendance
- To carry out first strike for the first day of absence
- To be the first point of contact for parents / carers regarding attendance matters
- To prepare attendance and lates reports as per this policy
- To process and file notes for absence in pupils' files
- To contact parents / carers regarding unauthorised absences outstanding for more than a week. (Community Leaders to be notified of problematic outcomes)
- To confirm and authorise permission for part day absence (e.g. medical appointments or pupils sent home ill)

- To prepare EWO referral documentation as identified by Community Leaders.
- To prepare and dispatch all correspondence with parents/carers regarding attendance (including certificates)
- To scan attendance details for patterns and notify Community Leaders
- To monitor the effective completion of registers by staff

Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)

- To meet regularly with the Community Leaders regarding attendance matters
- To review the school registers and take action where necessary
- To support and advise families to help pupils achieve good levels of attendance
- To refer to other agencies where there are specific needs and concerns

EVERY CHILD MATTERS

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the outcomes of Every Child Matters:

Be healthy - Attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy.

Stay Safe - Schools and the Local Authority have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children. The best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly

Enjoy and Achieve - Good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfillment this brings.

Make a Positive Contribution - Membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others.

Achieve Economic Well-being - Good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS

What can you do to encourage your son to attend school?

Make sure your son gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he leaves home in the correct uniform and is properly equipped.

Show your son by your interest, that you value his education. Your son will bring home his pupil planner each day. Please ensure you look at it and write any messages in it as necessary ready for the next day.

What can you do if your child is trying to avoid coming to school?

Contact your son's Community Leader immediately and openly discuss your worries.

Your son could be trying to avoid school for a number of reasons – difficulties with work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your son's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your son's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may refer you to an officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.