



Fladbury
Church of England First School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Governor Committee Responsible:	Personnel
Status:	Statutory / Non-statutory
Review Cycle:	
Staff Lead:	J Wilson (Head Teacher)
Date of Approval:	November 2022
Review date:	September 2025

OUR VISION

Every child at Fladbury will know they are loved by God, have a happy heart and be part of a flourishing, well-led school. When they leave Fladbury, they will be well-prepared to meet challenges, confident in their abilities and look forward to their bright future with an open mind.

John 10:10, "I came that you may have life and have it to the full."

“Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone’s responsibility in school; it is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.”

Working together to improve school attendance Guidance, DFE May 2022

Fladbury First School expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved.

- Worcestershire Local Authorities target for attendance is 96%
- At Fladbury First School, we are continuously working towards our goal of 97% attendance for all pupils.

Overall Aims:

This is a successful first school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of our school community to reach out for excellence. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore, that you make sure your child attends regularly. This policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality:

The legal framework:

By law, all children of compulsory school age (normally five to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. As a parent, you have a legal responsibility to make sure this happens – either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements to give them a suitable, full-time education. Once your child is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. This means your child should not have sessions of unauthorised absence.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines parent as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
 - any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
 - any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person
- Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

The School Day

The school day begins at 8.55am until 3.25pm

At Fladbury First School, we expect all pupils to:

- } Be aware that they must attend every school day
- } Be aware that they must attend school punctually
- } Be aware that they must attend school prepared for the day
- } Speak to a member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance

- We believe that attending school, on time, is key to enabling children to make the most of the opportunities we offer to prepare them for their future.
- We will work in partnership with our families to identify the reasons for any poor attendance, supporting them in addressing any barriers to attendance for their child.
- Promoting good attendance is a matter for the whole school community. This policy sets out our expectations and our approach and is in line with the Department for Education's guidance (August 2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance.'
- Every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers.
- This policy will be applied consistently and fairly. In applying this policy, we will take into account the needs of individual pupils.
- This policy is supported by other school policies and procedures e.g., admissions, safeguarding and child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour and all-inclusive practice within school.

Head Teacher:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Worcestershire Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Worcestershire Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires.
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for their year groups.
- To meet with the Office Manager to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

Office Manager:

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To implement the daily registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To contact parents/carers by letter, following 3 instances of lateness or absence.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

Staff:

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done at 9.00 am and 1.00 pm.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

Parents:

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. Pupils' should be brought child back to school after appointments. Pupils should miss as little time as possible as any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school on the first day **and every day** of absence for their child.
- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

Strategies for Promoting/ Rewarding Excellent Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 97%) we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletter – The Fladbury Fanfare. This regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a "present" mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out

between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year) for whatever reason (including sickness and unauthorized absences). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Investigation Service.

Severe Absenteeism (SA)

Particular focus is given to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners will work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by us, the local authority, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. We and the local authority will be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment. Further information is available in the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In all cases, we and the local authority are expected to make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of our regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Both persistent and severe absence are central to our school strategy for improving

attendance.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day **and then every day** of absence;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Text on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Investigation Service if attendance moves below 90% within any given 3 month period.

Telephone Numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Education Investigation Service:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Investigation Service from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the EIS themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The children's entrance opens at 8.45am and closes promptly at 8.55am when the school day begins. Registers are marked and closed by 9.05am. Up until that time children arriving between 9.05am and 9.15am are marked as late (L). Children arriving after 9.15am are classed as very late and in accordance with the regulations they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence (U). This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave of absence:

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence and the Head Teacher will consider each application individually taking into account specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. If a leave of absence is granted, the Head Teacher should determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. Leave of absences are only granted in exceptional circumstances and it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. **Please note, the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.**

At Fladbury First School we have determined absence in the Reception year will be authorised until the child reaches the term in which they turn statutory school age (5). Any further leave of absence requested during term time will be **unauthorised**, unless the reasoning falls with exceptional circumstances

The minimum level of overall attendance set for this school by the local authority is 96% and we will keep you updated regularly about progress towards this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Worcestershire. Our school target is to achieve 97% overall attendance this year.

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

People who Deal with Attendance in our School are:

Miss Wilson, Headteacher
All Class Teachers
Mrs Edwards, School Office