



# Attendance Policy

Full Governing Body  
responsible for review – annually  
Last review September 2023

## Attendance Policy

At Featherstone Wood we want the whole school community to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality. We aim to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, enabling them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states:

Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

(a) to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

Featherstone Wood is committed to reducing overall absence, particularly unauthorised absence and persistent absence, in line with the expectations of the Department for Education.

Featherstone Wood continues to maintain and improve the attendance of our pupils as follows:

- Through providing a safe learning environment by:
  - having a school building which is maintained and checked continuously
  - stringently applying all safeguarding procedures
  - applying the behaviour management policy
- Through ensuring that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis. Registers are taken at the beginning of each teaching session by the class staff using Attendance in SIMS, in accordance with DfE guidance. See Absence and Attendance Codes, Appendix A.
- Through all members of the school community encouraging good attendance and the investigation of all unexplained and unjustified absence. All unexplained absences are followed up by a text using Arbor, requesting that the parent/carer contact the school to explain the absence.
- Through staff setting a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Through our Attendance Administrative assistant following up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality. Attendance under 90% is followed up with a half termly letter offering a meeting with parents to discuss support for improved attendance.
- Through the school keeping parents informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record through sharing their attendance at parent/teacher consultations and sending a copy home with the annual report in July. Also, through arranging additional meetings to share this information with parents whose children's attendance/punctuality cause concern.
- Through the Attendance Administrative Assistant, the Senior Leadership Team consistently work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern.

### **The expectation for parents include:**

- A legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance.
- Parents are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed in correct school uniform and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents will inform school on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school via Studybugs, Arbor or by telephone.
- Parents will avoid arranging family holidays during term time.
- Parents will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary, through meetings or phone calls.
- Parents will ensure that school is informed of any changes of contact details via the Arbor App or by emailing the school office of any subsequent changes.

### **The expectations for pupils include:**

- All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually, and to be properly dressed in correct school uniform.
- Pupils are expected to be ready to learn.

## **Lateness**

If a child is late for school, they must enter school via the front entrance. Parents whose children are regularly late for school, will be monitored by the attendance administrative assistant and the Attendance Lead who will write to and work with the parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality. If persistent lateness, the Attendance Improvement Officer may work with the parents to improve punctuality.

## **Absences**

Parents must provide an explanation for all absences from school whether by phone call, in writing or by email. Absence due to sickness is reported via the Studybugs App. The attendance administrative assistant and/or the Headteacher or Senior Leaders will decide whether to accept the reason given and to authorise the absence. It is the school and not the parent who authorises absence.

Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/ dental appointments (though these should be made, whenever possible, outside school hours)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement

Absence from school will only be authorised in exceptional/extenuating circumstances for holidays in term time

Absence will also be unauthorised if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation

The Headteacher/Attendance Lead makes the decision about whether an absence should be authorised or unauthorised. The attendance administrative assistant informs parents.

## **Following up Absences**

Featherstone Wood follows up all absences from school. If no reason has been provided for a pupil's absence by 9:30am on the first day of absence, a parent of the pupil will be contacted by In-App message via Arbor, by the Attendance administrative assistant. If this message is not responded to, the Attendance administrative assistant will phone the parent, or other contact provided. If there still has been no contact from the parent (s) giving the reason for absence, this will then be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Parents whose children have an attendance at school of less than 90% will receive a letter half termly from the school to bring about an improvement in attendance. An appointment will be offered with the Attendance Lead in an attempt to resolve any issues. If the pupil's attendance does not improve sufficiently, the pupil will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer.

## **Leaving and returning to School during the School Day**

Parents must collect their child if they need to leave site during the school day. The parent must sign their child out of school and must sign them back into school on their return, via the Inentry system in the main reception. If parents are requesting time off for medical appointments during the school day, then they are to request this via email and upload evidence of the appointment.

## **Term Time Holidays**

Featherstone Wood school will not authorise family holidays during term time except in exceptional/extenuating circumstances. Parents requesting a family holiday or leave of absence during term time must apply in writing via the Office. The Headteacher will send a reply letter stating whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised. On some occasions, she may wish to meet with the parents to discuss the request further. During SATS, exam periods and the first two weeks of the school year, term time holidays will not be authorised for any reason.

## **A Performance Licence**

The Headteacher will consider all requests; leave of absence is discretionary, on an individual case-by-case basis. Only requests with pre-agreed time/days will be considered. We will not consider open-licenses.

## **The Use of Legal Action**

Subsection (1) of section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added two new sections (444A and 444B) to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These new sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty. The offence of irregular attendance has not changed.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 sets out the framework for the operation of the penalty notice scheme.

## **Penalty Notices**

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so. For example, it could be used where a parent has failed to engage in any supportive measures. It will be particularly useful as a sanction at an early stage before attendance problems become entrenched and where the Local Authority considers that a prosecution would be too heavy handed. The key consideration in deciding whether to issue a penalty notice will be whether it can be effective in helping to get the pupil who is truanting back into school, or alternative provision (as appropriate).

At Featherstone Wood School we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (a half day equals 1 session) unauthorised absence over one term (including unauthorised holidays), the school will ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 per child if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days. If the penalty is not paid, the Local Authority may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance.

The usual response to a first offence should be a warning rather than a penalty, (see appendix H for warning letter). However, a penalty notice can be issued without a warning in exceptional circumstances. The school may make the decision to issue the warning letter (Appendix H) as necessary. These should be agreed with the Central Attendance and Employment support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Behaviour and Attendance.

## **Responsibilities of the Local Authority for issuing Penalty Notices**

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notice rests with the Local Authority and this responsibility may not be delegated to schools or the police. The Local Authority may not prevent academies, schools or the police from issuing notices if they are willing to do so but any notices issued by them must comply with the Local Authority Code of Conduct. The Local Authority issues penalty notices on behalf of Hertfordshire schools in order to ensure consistency and in the event that a prosecution may need to be brought against the parent (Appendix J).

Local authorities are responsible for the administration of the scheme and may make such operational arrangements as they see fit. Local authorities must issue a local code of conduct to ensure the scheme operates consistently. It is for Local Authorities to set out in their local code of conduct the levels of unauthorised absence above which a penalty notice may be issued.

## **Rewards**

Featherstone Wood School rewards good attendance. Attendance is celebrated at the end of every week in assembly and the class with the best attendance for the previous week is celebrated in the school newsletter as well as on the school attendance Awards display. Attendance is displayed on a notice board in both halls. Pupils receive certificates for every term that they have 100% attendance. The class with the best attendance each term participate in a 'treat' activity organised by the Headteacher.

## **Integrated Working**

Featherstone Wood School works with other agencies and professionals to ensure that our pupils receive all the support available to achieve good attendance. The school will demonstrate full commitment to integrated working by:

- using the Early Help Module
- sharing information appropriately
- working with other agencies

**Working with the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)**

Featherstone Wood School works in partnership with the allocated AIO to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school. Information to enable the AIO to carry out an effective consultation visit and/or home visit will be provided by the Attendance Administrative assistant and Senior Leaders. The school meets the AIO on an agreed schedule termly. The AIO works with individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance. When attendance does not improve sufficiently, and after discussion with the AIO, the school will make a referral to Children, Schools and Families for the AIO to work with the family on a formal basis.

**Publication of Information**

Featherstone Wood School shares information on individual pupils' attendance as necessary with parents, pupils and staff through discussion and meetings. The school may also provide current attendance statistics on the school website and in newsletters. Attendance is a standing item on the agenda of school Governors' meetings through the Headteacher's report. Pupils are informed about the importance of school attendance through assemblies, lessons and displays in school. The Attendance Administrative assistant and Headteacher are responsible for ensuring that data collected by the Department for Education is accurate.

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis.

APPENDIX A

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Partial and forced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

APPENDIX H  
WARNING LETTER

Dear

**The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007,**

**Name of pupil ----- Registered at ----- (school name)**

This is a formal warning that you are at risk of being in breach of the regulations stated above. ----- (child's name) has been absent from school and the absence(s) has/have not been authorised.

Should the number of unauthorised absence sessions reach 15 or more in the current term you will be in breach of the regulations and the Local Authority may issue you with a penalty notice.

The notice requires you to pay a penalty of £60 within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Each parent is liable to pay a separate penalty and penalty notices are issued for each child to whom the absence relates.

Payment of the penalty enables you to discharge your liability for the offence for the period in question of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. (section 444, The Education Act 1996).

Failure to pay the penalty means you are liable to prosecution for the offence, by summons to appear before the local Magistrates Court. On conviction you may be liable for a fine of up to £1,000 per parent. This is a criminal offence which carries a criminal record. The Local Authority will ask for costs of £125 to be awarded against you.

If you fail to ensure your child attends regularly and 15 sessions of unauthorised absence is reached a penalty notice will be issued. **You will not receive a further warning before the penalty is imposed.**

If you believe there are legitimate reasons for your child's absence please contact me within 5 working days to discuss the matter.

Yours sincerely

----- (Name)

----- (Designation)

**Appendix B – PLEASE NOTE THAT A SEPARATE APPLICATION SHOULD BE COMPLETED FOR EACH PARENT AND ANYONE ELSE TO WHOM A WARNING/NOTICE IS TO BE SENT. THE INFORMATION CONTAINED WITHIN THIS APPLICATION FORM MAY ALSO BE USED AS PART OF ANY LEGAL ACTION TAKEN SO EACH SECTION MUST BE FULLY COMPLETED**

**Hertfordshire County Council  
Children’s Services  
Integrated Services for Learning  
Attendance Team**

**Application for a Penalty Notice to be issued**

Name of person requesting issue of Penalty Notice:	
Position: (Head, Deputy or Assistant Head only)	
Contact details:	
Name of person completing application:	

Pupil’s Name:	
Date of Birth:	
School Year Group:	
School/Academy:	
Parent <b>full</b> name:	
Address:	
Telephone:	

<b>Please confirm the following:</b>	
1. You have read the Code of Conduct and this application complies	<b>Y</b>
2. Should the Notice remain unpaid and the Local Authority prosecutes, please confirm who will provide a witness statement and/or attend court as required – Name: _____ Designation: _____	
3. You have sent each parent the Factsheet with the warning letter	<b>Y</b>

Date of warning letter:
<b>Please attach copies of:</b>
1. Warning letter
2. Certificate of attendance signed by the head teacher
3. Up to date SIMS (or equivalent) printout – Registration Certificate
<b><i>Please note that applications will not be processed if the necessary</i></b>



*information is not attached*

**THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS MUST BE COMPLETED**

1. Information on supportive measures offered to family. ***Please include dates of any meetings and/or contact held with parents to address poor attendance***


2. Information on the parent(s) failure to co-operate:


3. Has the pupil been referred to or discussed with the Local Authority Attendance Officer?  
Yes/No – **if yes, please give details**


Does the pupil have any additional needs e.g. SEND?


Any other relevant information


Please send this application **within 10 school days of the last absence** to the Attendance Team Manager for the area where the school is based.

**West Area Attendance Team – Watford & Three Rivers, Dacorum & St Albans, Hertsmere**  
Attendance Team Manager, Post Point AP 1102, Apsley 2, Brindley Way, Hemel Hempstead HP3 9BF

**East Area Attendance Team – East Herts & Broxbourne, North Herts & Stevenage, Welwyn & Hatfield**  
Attendance Team Manager, Room 127, Ground Floor, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DF

**All applications to be sent via Herts/Schools FX as follows –**

**West Area – [attendancedutywest@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendancedutywest@hertfordshire.gov.uk)**

**East Area – [attendancedutyeast@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendancedutyeast@hertfordshire.gov.uk)**

APPENDIX J

**PENALTY NOTICE**  
**S.444A EDUCATION ACT 1996**

**Please read these notes carefully**

**PART 1**

If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence under s.444 Education Act 1996.

To: Parent name  
Of: Parent address

You are the parent of <<pupil name>> (called in this notice "the pupil") who is a registered pupil at << school name>>  
Between (date) and (date) the pupil failed to attend regularly at <<name of school>>.

This notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of being prosecuted for the offence given above. The amount of the penalty is £60 / £120 in accordance with the table overleaf. If you pay this penalty within the time limits set out below, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence set out in this notice.

Payment should be made within 21 days. If paid after 21 days but within 28 days the penalty is doubled to £120. For payment details please see over.

**No reminders will be sent. If payment is not received by ( ) you will be liable for prosecution for the offence and could be subject to a fine of up to £1,000.**

This notice is issued by:

Date of issue: .....

Signed.....

PART 2

Pupil's Name:

Please complete the following and return this notice with your payment to County Lead for Behaviour & Attendance, Hertfordshire County Council, c/o Room 132a, County Hall, Hertford. SG13 8DF

Name: .....

Address: .....

I attach payment in the sum of £ .....

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Payment of **£60** should be received by ( ). **No reminders will be sent.** After this date the penalty rises to **£120**. This should be received by ( ) after this date you will be liable for prosecution for the offence and could be subject to a fine of up to **£1,000**.

A cheque or postal order (made out to Hertfordshire County Council) should be sent to Hertfordshire County Council, Room 132a, County Hall, Hertford, SG13 8DF.

If you wish to pay by Debit/Credit Card please contact 01992 555407/8 quoting 742300/26084, your child's name, school and reference number <<IES reference number>> Without this information your payment may not be processed correctly and you risk prosecution in relation to the non-payment of this fine.

**Note**

**1. Local Code of Conduct**

This notice is issued in accordance with a local code of conduct drawn up by Hertfordshire County Council. Any correspondence about the code should be addressed to: The County Lead for Behaviour and Attendance, Room 132a County Hall, Hertford, SG13 8DF telephone 0300 123 4043

**2. Withdrawal**

This notice may be withdrawn by Hertfordshire County Council if it is shown that it should not have been issued to you or has not been issued to you in accordance with the local code of conduct. If you believe that the notice was wrongly issued you should contact the County Council to ask for it to be withdrawn as soon as possible, stating why you believe the notice to have been incorrectly issued. The County

Council will consider your request and contact you to let you know whether the notice is withdrawn.

If the notice is not withdrawn and you do not pay, you will be liable for prosecution for the offence that your child has failed to attend school regularly.

**3. Payment**

You should complete the notice above and send or deliver it to Hertfordshire County Council at the address given. If you wish to pay in person you must make an appointment or it will not be possible to receive your payment. If you wish to pay by Debit/Credit Card please contact 01992 555407/8 quoting 742300/26084, your child's name, school and reference number. Without this

information your payment may not be processed correctly and you risk prosecution in relation to the non-payment of this fine.

#### **4. Prosecution**

If you do not pay the penalty, and the notice is not withdrawn, you will be liable for prosecution for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. You will receive a separate summons for this which will give you notice of the time and date of the court hearing. You will be able to defend yourself and you will be advised to seek legal representation; in some cases you may be entitled to legal aid. Information on obtaining legal advice and legal aid can be obtained from Community Legal Advice 0845 345 4345 Mon- Fri 9.00 am – 8pm Sat 9.00am – 12.00 pm or from [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)