



## Attendance Policy

*Reviewed: Spring 2023*

*Next review date: Spring 2025*

.....  
Chair of Governors

.....  
Date





## **Attendance Policy**

Featherstone Wood School is committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, enabling our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Good attendance helps the children within this community to maximise their learning. This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

### **Target setting**

This school sets targets in accordance with Regulations. The annual target is the total absences expected in the school year, expressed as a percentage of the total possible attendance by pupils at the school.

### **Expectations**

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents or carers, and pupils. All these groups need to understand the expectations which the policy makes of them. Parents and carers need to know that they have a legal obligation to ensure their child attends school, and that they do not automatically have the right to take them on holiday during term time. Absences from school affect the whole school community, not just the child concerned.

Parents should:-

- ensure their child attends school regularly, on time, properly dressed and equipped, and in a fit condition to learn.
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the school Attendance Policy
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify their children's school by informing the school on the 1<sup>st</sup> day, regarding their child's reason for absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the children returns to school.

- Parents and carers will also maintain regular contact with the school until their child returns to school. Parents and carers are expected to inform relatives and friends of the school attendance policy so that no unexpected holidays are arranged during term time. (School Procedures for Punctuality - Appendix 6)
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- should not book holidays during term time

The school will:

- The school will provide a safe learning environment and maintain records of attendance according to legislation and guidance, on a daily basis. The school will follow up instances of poor attendance and punctuality.
- Schools are required to call attendance registers. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.
- Registers must be taken at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. They should ensure that pupils can be accounted for in an emergency and that a pupil removed from the school at lunchtime will not go unnoticed.
- Registers must record whether each pupil is present; attending an approved educational activity; absent; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.
- Registers should open and close at regular, set times and this information should be publicised to parents.

EYFS and KS1 doors open at 8:45am and the register closes at 8.55am.

KS2 doors (for Years 5 & 6) open at 8:30am and register closes at 8:40am.

KS2 doors (for Years 3 & 4) open at 8:45am and the register closes at 8.55am.

- When calling the register the appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each pupil's name. Gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later.
- When the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent correction to the register made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

## **Following up lateness**

Schools should take steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness should be monitored and followed up.

School policies, brochures and website should clearly state the time at which each school session begins and finishes, including the time at which registers open and close. Schools should not keep a register open for the whole session.

When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she should be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.

When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session using the correct code.

When a pupil arrives 15 minutes after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.

When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, his/her presence on site should be noted in a book in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation, etc.

Parents and carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by the school to bring about an improvement in punctuality. (Appendix 1)

The school will follow up lateness, all absences and pupils with low levels of attendance.

## **Absences**

The school actively discourages parents and carers from taking their children out of school during term time:

Notification must be provided for all absences from school and the school will follow this up on all occasions. Absences are authorised only by the Headteacher.

Requests for leave of absence, which will only be given in exceptional circumstances, must be made at least 2 weeks in advance on the school form available from the office. (Appendix 2)

No travel arrangements should be made until permission has been given.

If a child is absent from school, parents and carers must contact the school office, with the reason, on the first day of absence and keep in regular contact thereafter until their child returns to school. They must confirm the reason for the child's absence on their return.

If a medical appointment is known in advance, parents and carers must notify the school in writing. If an emergency appointment is made parents should phone the school office in order to keep the school up-to-date. Where possible medical appointments should be made out of school hours.

Parents and carers must not encourage their child to tell a lie about absences - this does not show respect for authority which is a life skill necessary for their future schooling and employment.

Parents and carers must give a valid reason for absence – being 'ill' is not enough.

The school operates a '1<sup>st</sup> day response' policy. This means that if we have not heard from parents and carers by 9am to tell us why their child is not coming to school that day, we will contact them. The particulars of telephone calls are recorded and monitored.  
(Appendix10)

Permission will not be given for holidays after the event has taken place.

Children will not be given work to do during a holiday.

Evidence will be requested where a company requires an employee to take holidays during term time.

Parents and carers are expected to contact the school if they cannot get back from a holiday on time.

If permission is refused for a holiday, a letter will be sent giving the reasons. If permission is authorised, you will also be informed by letter. (Appendix 3 and 4)

A child can be removed from the school's registers if they fail to return from an extended family holiday after both school and LA have tried to locate the pupil. Also, if there are 20 days continuous unauthorised absences, and both the Local Authority and school have tried and failed to locate the pupil.

Registers are monitored on a regular basis by our Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) to look at patterns of absence, identify individuals or group absences, sibling attendance, INSETs at sibling schools, etc. They may ask to see parents and carers if attendance is not satisfactory.

The expectation is over 96% for your child to achieve their potential and to get the most out of the opportunities offered in school. If your child's attendance falls below 95% and continues to drop, this is of some concern to us. A letter will be sent to you. If your child's attendance drops below 90%, it is likely that you will be asked for evidence for absences in order for them to be authorised. Evidence can be in the form of a GP appointment card, hospital letter or prescription. If a child has 15 un-authorised in a 12 week school period, a formal warning letter will be sent to both parents before a fixed penalty notice is issued.  
(Appendix 7, 8 and 9)

A fixed penalty notice of £60 will be issued if a child has more than 15 sessions of unauthorised absences in a 12 school week period. If this fine is not paid within the time limit the penalty rises to £120 which must be paid within 28 days. A maximum of two separate penalty notices will be issued to a parent within any twelve month period. Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.

The school monitors the attendance of all pupils including those not yet statutory school age. If attendance falls for those pupils a letter will be sent to parents.  
(Appendix11)

### **Attendance Panels and Monitoring**

Attendance across the school is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team each half term. Alongside the administrative team, parents are invited to attend a 'rigorous yet support' attendance panel when attendance/punctuality is highlighted as an area of concern. Detailed records are kept of these meetings and the impact of support from the school is noted. Referrals to the Attendance Team are made if insufficient impact is seen.

### **The school rewards good attendance**

The school works in partnership with the Attendance Improvement Officer to promote good attendance

The school rewards good attendance by certificates and the weekly class attendance cup.  
(Appendix 5)

### **Leaving and returning during the school day**

Notification must be given if a child is leaving school during the day. The relevant book must be signed out and in again if necessary at the office.

See appendices for further information.

### **Linked Policies**

Code of conduct

Home- school agreement

## Appendix 1

Dear Parent/Carer

Our records show that since the beginning of this academic year ..... has been late on ..... occasions.

Persistent lateness means your child walks in late to a class and misses out on vital information. If they are always 20-30 minutes late they always miss phonics, if they are always 30-50 minutes late they always miss phonics and half of literacy. This then impacts on their learning not only in those lessons but every other subject that they do in school. It adds stress to the children because they are walking in late and then do not know what they are meant to be doing, over time they realise that they are not keeping up with their peers and this causes anxiety.

We would appreciate your support to make sure ..... is in class for registration which is between 8.50am – 9.00am. If you would like to discuss his/her punctuality please contact myself and I will be happy to talk to you and if required arrange a meeting.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

L.Shuttleworth  
Head Teacher

## Appendix 2

### Requesting Permission for School Absence

As you may be aware, the Department of Education and Skills are seeking to tighten up on procedures in order to deter parents taking their children out of school during term time to go on holiday.

We do recommend that holidays are taken in school holidays. It is particularly important that children are in school during May when some of the Statutory Assessment Tests and optional tests are carried out. Leave will not be approved for this period.

Should the number of unauthorised absence sessions reach 15 or more in the current and/or previous 12 weeks, 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.

.....  
Name of Pupil(s).....

Year Group (s).....

Holiday Dates:  
From:.....To.....

Number of School Days: .....

Briefly outline the exceptional circumstances upon which the request is based:

.....  
.....

Signed:..... Parent / Carer

Signed:..... Parent / Carer

Un/Authorised:.....Headteacher



### **Appendix 3**

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you for requesting permission to take your child/children out of school however no exceptional circumstances have been provided that would suggest the holiday needs to be within term time. I am unable to authorise this leave.

Should you take your children out of school, their absence will be unauthorised and may be reported to the Attendance Improvement Officer. Unauthorised absences can lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority. This is a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid by 28 days. If this fine is not paid, parents may be prosecuted for their child's poor attendance.

If you wish to discuss this any further, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Yours faithfully

L.Shuttleworth  
Head Teacher

## **Appendix 4**

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you for requesting permission to take your child/children out of school. I have authorised this leave and the absence will be recorded as authorised.

If you wish to discuss this any further, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

Miss L Shuttleworth  
Head Teacher

## **Appendix 5**

Dear Parent/Carer,

I enclose a copy of your child's current attendance certificate. Well done to those children whose attendance is 100%. It is really encouraging to see a lot of children who have been in school every day since the start of the Autumn Term.

You may be aware that an attendance trophy is awarded to the class with the highest attendance each week in a celebration assembly. This news is also in the newsletter. 100% attendance certificates are awarded to those children who have attended school every day for that particular half-term. Special badges will be awarded to children with outstanding attendance at the end of the school year. We will let you know if your child is receiving an award so that you can attend the celebration assembly. Please come in to see the Attendance Display which is in the assembly hall.

The expectation is over 96% for your child to achieve their potential and to get the most out of the opportunities offered in school. If your child's is below 95% and continues to drop, this is of some concern to us. If your child's attendance is below 90%, it is likely that you will be asked for evidence for absences in order for them to be authorised. Evidence can be in the form of GP appointment card, hospital letters or prescriptions.

All holidays, in line with Government policy, are no longer authorised. If you are taking a child out of school for a holiday, please come to the school office to collect a school form in order that you can inform us.

Unauthorised absences are: holidays taken in term time, where a child arrives late after the register has closed or if you do not give a valid reason for their absence. If your child's attendance is low and you have been asked for evidence which has not been supplied, this will also be an unauthorised absence.

Ongoing unauthorised absences can lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority. This is a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid by 28 days. If this fine is not paid, parents may be prosecuted for their child's poor attendance.

If you have concerns about your child's attendance and would like support, please call the school for a meeting. If appropriate we can refer you to: The School Nurse, Family Support worker or other agencies for some support.

### **Reporting your child's absence**

When reporting your child's absence please call the school office as soon as possible in the morning. Our telephone number is 01438 235550. Stating that your child is just unwell is insufficient and you may be contacted for further information.

Of course, children fall ill on occasions but we would encourage you to send your child into school. They may well, once engaged in learning, feel better but if they deteriorate we will call you straight away. Please ensure that school has your current telephone number and address in case of an emergency.

Finally, I would like to remind you of the school routine at the start of the day. **Year 5 & 6 start school at 8.30am. Doors close at 8.40am. Year 3, 4, KS1 and EYFS start at 8.45am and doors close at 8.55am.** Once classroom doors are closed please bring your child to the school office to be signed in. Routines are a very important part of the school day and children coming in late can cause disruption to a settled class and embarrassment to the late child.

Thank you for your support in these matters.

Louise Shuttleworth  
Head Teacher

## Appendix 6

### School Procedures for Punctuality

1. **Year 5 & 6 start school at 8.30am. Doors close at 8.40am. Year 3, 4, KS1 and EYFS start at 8.45am and doors close at 8.55am.**
2. **Unless attending the breakfast club children must not arrive on school premises before 8.30.** They then go straight to their classrooms where the teacher will be waiting to supervise them.
3. **Please leave your child at the classroom door.** Parents and carers are not allowed to come into school by the main door to drop children off or collect them
4. If there is an URGENT issue you need to discuss with your child's teacher **before the start of the day**, please ring the school. Otherwise, teachers will make every effort to see you after school or as soon as possible
5. **Any child who arrives after doors are closed will be marked as late.** Parents and carers are required to bring their child to the office and fill in the reason for lateness in the late book. Examples of some of the reasons not regarded as acceptable are: got out of bed late, overslept, had a late night, had to drop off other brothers and sisters.
6. If your child is late, office staff will take your child to the classroom; please do not walk around the school without permission
7. **Any child who arrives 10 minutes after the doors have closed will be marked as an unauthorised absence as registers close at this time.**
8. If your child has a medical appointment, which means they will be late to school, please let us know in advance by note or phone call

Thank you for your continued support!

## Appendix 7

Dear Parent/Carer

Our records show that since the beginning of this academic year .....attendance has been .....%. This level of attendance is below the school's minimum target attendance of 96%.

Ongoing poor attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success, and many pupils have difficulty maintaining friendships if they have long or numerous periods of absence.

We wish to help ..... to improve his/her attendance. If you would like to discuss his/her attendance please contact myself on 01438 235550 and I will be happy to talk with you and if required arrange a meeting.

We would appreciate your support to make sure ..... attendance improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and will be in touch again if it does not improve.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

L.Shuttleworth  
Head Teacher

## Appendix 8

Dear Parent/Carer

Since the start of the School year ..... has been absent for... sessions. This is concerning as it means ..... attendance overall is .....% which is significantly below the School's minimum target of 96%. We understand that some absence due to illness may be unavoidable. However it is important the School are aware of any on-going health problems so we can put the correct support in place.

We are sure that you are aware that every school day counts and missing any time from school results in lost learning. We want to support ..... and make certain that he/she does not get behind with work or miss out on any opportunities school offers.

Due to the large amount of absence ..... has had, I have met with the Attendance Improvement Officer to discuss this matter. I must inform you that we will now require a doctor's note or appointment card for any future periods of absence.

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their child is in school. On going unauthorised absence could lead to a Penalty Notice being issued, which is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days and £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine is not paid within 28 days parents could be prosecuted for their child's poor attendance.

We will continue to monitor ..... attendance. If you wish to discuss his/her attendance with us please contact me on 01438 235550 I will be happy to talk with you or arrange a meeting if required.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Yours sincerely,

L.Shuttleworth  
Head Teacher

## Appendix 9

### Dear Parent/Carer

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Name of pupil .....Registered at Featherstone Wood Primary School.

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

Should the number of unauthorised absence sessions reach 15 or more in the current and/or previous 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

Louise Shuttleworth  
Head Teacher



## Appendix 10

### Letter to Parents and Carers – Unexplained Absence

Dear

**Name:**

**Class:**

**Teacher:**

I am concerned that ..... has been absent on the dates below for reasons unknown to us.

As you are aware, we request that you inform us of the reason for absences. Please complete the form below and return it to the school by .... (give a week) at the latest.

Yours sincerely

Louise Shuttleworth  
Headteacher

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..... was absent from school on the dates below because:

Date .....



**Appendix 11**

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: ..... a registered pupil at Featherstone Wood School

When I recently checked the attendance registers, I am growing increasingly concerned that ..... has an attendance rate of .....%.

Although ..... 's school attendance is not compulsory until ..... when you will become legally responsible for ensuring he/she attends school regularly, I am writing now to advise you of the need for a good pattern of school attendance to be in place by then.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

L.Shuttleworth  
Head Teacher



