



Bristol Drive
Lincoln
LN6 7UE

Attendance Policy

September 2024

This policy aims to give all members of the school community clear guidance with regard to the attendance of children at Sir Francis Hill Primary School.

Policy Owner	Headteacher
Governing Body Committee	Development
Date Approved by Governors	September 2024
Next Review Date	September 2025

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Sir Francis Hill Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. We expect all children on roll to attend every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

The most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning. Although parents/ carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head teacher, Senior Leadership Team, Welfare Officer and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise parents, carers and pupils' awareness of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, and staff so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

DEFINITIONS

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

PROCEDURES

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Maintain appropriate registration processes, using Arbor to record attendance and Invenry, to record any children late to school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- Have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- Inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- Work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Seek external support for any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve. This could include Children's Services, if school feel that a child's basic needs are not being met.
- Report attendance statistics to Lincolnshire LA and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Headteacher or Attendance Lead Karen Revill who has responsibility for monitoring attendance.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Ensuring that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness.
- Making every effort to book medical appointments outside of school hours.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence due to illness.
- Offering a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence and also the date on which they are expected to return to school. Notification of absence should be by parental note, telephone call or in person.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter/text or a photocopy of a prescription).
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Keep the school informed of changes to contact details.
- Inform the school immediately if they are removing their child to start at another school. The parents must give details of the new school.
- Collect their children from school at the agreed time. With regards to collection, we ask that parents respect and follow the schools' rules for Health and Safety and Security reasons.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- Informing the Headteacher/Attendance Lead/Safeguarding Lead where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Dealing compassionately with individual cases.
- Monitoring follow-up actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.

- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Awarding 100% certificates to individuals termly
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted on the register
- Discussing attendance issues at parents' evenings where necessary

Parentally condoned, unjustifiable absence is equally as damaging as truancy. If, in the opinion of the school, an explanation offered by a parent for absence is unacceptable (or where no explanation is given) the absence must be treated as UNAUTHORISED.

Headteacher and Attendance Lead

The Headteacher and Attendance Lead are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school meets all legal requirements, sets targets for attendance and unauthorised absence and publishes attendance figures.
- Ensuring that parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality at the point of admission.
- Provide a reward system for those with excellent (100%) attendance
- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Liaising with other professionals to discuss specific cases, determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence and support available

Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home through the school Inventory system
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher and Attendance Lead.

Governing Body

The Governing Body will be reported to at Full Governing Body regarding Attendance. They are responsible for:

- Asking challenging questions regarding attendance and how we are supporting the families and children with attendance matters
- Liaising with the Attendance Officer regarding Case Studies about how we have supported individual families and pupils
- Challenging trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Supporting the SLT with matters regarding to attendance
- Review the Attendance Audit with the Attendance Officer

REGISTRATION

All the school doors open at 8.50 am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom. For the afternoon session a bell will be rung at 1.00 pm. Children should line up in the playground from where teachers will lead them to class.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.15 am and by 1.15 pm. (Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present).

All attendance records are documented using Arbor system. Attendance registers are legal documents, and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

LATENESS

Once the doors are closed the only way to get into school is via the main entrance. If any pupil arrives late the office staff will ask the parent to sign into the electronic signing in system that records the name, class, time and reason for lateness. If a child arrives unaccompanied by a parent the office staff will complete the record asking the pupil to offer a reason.

Any pupil who misses registration will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.15am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment, where the school has been notified, and subsequently come to school later will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, lateness impacts on learning not only for the individual, but the class as a whole.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns, the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues. Parents/carers will be invited by post to attend a School Attendance Panel Meeting, which will be held in school.

All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late must register at the office for purposes of fire regulations. Children arriving after the registers have closed will have their arrival recorded in the register and the electronic signing in system.

ABSENCES

When a pupil is absent for no apparent reason, it is the duty of all staff to consider all possible reasons. Consideration of the School Behaviour policy or Child Protection & Safeguarding policy may be needed in identifying reasons for such absence. In addressing such issues support should be sought from the SLT and/or the Headteacher.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised, not the parent.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date (one week after sending) then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

If a child has a prolonged absence following this initial contact the school may contact them once more to update their information regarding the child's absence. The time between contact being made for a second time will depend on the individual and the nature of the absence ie if it has involved hospitalisation. Those children whose attendance record is of concern to the school (persistent absentee) will be contacted for a second time after no longer than 4 days of absence.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

All family holidays will continue to be unauthorised as is our school policy and parents are required to complete Application for Leave of Absence forms in adequate time, ideally 14 days before the holiday requested is taken. Information relating to current attendance and progress will be collected from admin staff and class teachers before the attendance lead makes a phone call to the parent to discuss the possible impact this leave will have. (see Appendix 1). Admin staff will send the parent/carer a letter notifying them that the absence will be coded (G) unauthorised absence.

FIRST DAY CONTACT

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence.

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Admin staff check all of the registers from 9.15 am to 9.30 am on a daily

basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. If a child is absent and no message is received by 10 am, a member of the admin team will make contact with the parent. A printout list will be produced of those families receiving phone calls. If there is no response this list will be kept so that other admin staff have access to it should the parent return the call later in the day with the reason for absence.

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

If there are any child protection concerns the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed on the first day. Information should be passed to the relevant outside agencies immediately.

ILLNESS

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork. We have a policy in place for children who cannot attend due to medical reasons.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school may write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

ADDRESSING ATTENDANCE CONCERNS AND MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The school expects attendance of at least 95%. It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, Attendance Lead and the Governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school it is upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school may seek external support and alter its stance with regards to legal and financial penalties.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

Our admin staff, have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Arbor system. The Attendance Lead monitors attendance termly and ensures appropriate actions are taken following. Children are identified who are Persistent Absentees (90% and below). Letters are sent out to parents to inform them with the aim of improving attendance and attendance support meetings are arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Excellent attendance is also monitored termly. There is an attendance board to acknowledge achievements with regards to attendance. Termly children with 100% will be photographed with the other members of their class, presented with a certificate. There is also a weekly 100% attendance wheel where children who have 100% attendance have their name placed in a randomiser and can win a prize.

PENALTY NOTICES

The school share all attendance information with the local authority. The local authority will issue a penalty notice for unauthorised absence due to persistent absence or persistent lateness (after 9:15 am unauthorised). This will also include unauthorised absences for family holidays.

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register has closed all within 10 school weeks).

An unauthorised absence is when the child is away from school without the permission of the school. For example, an absence will be unauthorised when no reason for the absence is given despite the school trying to make contact with the parent to ascertain a reason, a child arrives in school after 9.15 am without the school being previously informed of a reason ie medical appointment or in a case where the parent might support the reason for absence, but the school do not. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher not the parent to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

New guidelines have been introduced on 19th August 2024 regarding penalty notices for unauthorised absence.

A penalty notice is a strategy used to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children at their school under the following legislation.

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.
- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 4448 of the same act empowers the local authority to issue a penalty notice.
- The first penalty notice issued will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days, this will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent within 3 years of the date of the first, so will often include considering prosecution.

Please note a penalty notice can also be issued if your child is seen in a public place within the first 5 days of an exclusion from school, as stated in Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. A penalty notice will be charged at £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Absences Flow Chart
Appendix 2	Application for pupils leave of absence form
Appendix 3	Letter to parents regarding penalty notice changes

Appendix 1 – Attendance Escalation of Intervention Flowchart

First Day Contact

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. If a child has a prolonged absence following this initial contact the school may contact them once more to update their information regarding the child's absence. Those children whose attendance record is of concern will be contacted for a second time after no longer than 4 days of absence. If no verbal contact can be made then a letter will be sent home. Absence will be recorded as UA if a reason is not provided in within 1 week

Weekly and Termly Attendance Monitoring

100% attendance = certificate and photograph termly

100% Achievements displayed on attendance display board in corridor
Attendance Wheel (Randomiser) Weekly

All pupils at PA (90% and below) identified and Letter of Concern sent half termly.
Individual attendance printout is available on request.

Attendance Leader identifies some children and invites parents for School Attendance Panel Meeting. At this meeting concerns discussed and identify and explore any issues that may be impacting on attendance.
Pupil Support Plans/Pastoral Supports Plans may be put in place

Monitoring continues.
If still in an attendance group of concern improvement further letters of concern will be issued half termly. Improvement will be acknowledged.

Failure to improve attendance may lead to invitation to a 2nd meeting, where action plans, attendance targets and review dates may be agreed.

Failure to improve attendance may lead to referrals for support from other agencies.

Persistent medical reasons may lead to the school asking parents to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence (ie Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription).

Failure to improve may lead to legal sanctions: Education Supervision Orders, Parenting Orders, Fixed Penalty Notice and Prosecutions.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

In September 2013 there was an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which prohibited the Headteacher of a school granting leave of absence for a pupil except where an ***application is made in advance*** and the Headteacher considers there are ***exceptional circumstances*** relating to the request. If a Headteacher authorises a leave of absence request, it will be his/her decision to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school.

Should you wish to make a request, which must be made prior to the proposed leave; please complete the application below providing any additional evidence in support of the exceptional circumstances, together with details of why the leave cannot be taken during any school holiday period. Each request will be considered based on the information provided. Leave of absence is not an entitlement and will not be granted for the sole purpose of a family holiday

1. To be completed by the parent or carer with whom the child normally resides			
School Name	SIR FRANCIS HILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY		
Name of Pupil		Class	
Address			
Dates Requested	From: (1 st date of proposed absence)	To: (last date of absence)	Total School Days
Supporting Information and the reason for the leave of absence request			

Please **do not** make any arrangements until you have confirmed with the school that the leave of absence is granted

2. Please provide details of any other siblings. A separate application form will be required for each child			
Child Name		School	
Child Name		School	

3. I confirm that I am the parent or carer with whom the child listed in section 1 resides			
Signed:		Please Print Name:	
Date:		Relationship to child	

For School Use Only:	Date Application Received:	Current Attendance: %
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Appendix 3 – Penalty notice letter sent to all parents/carers

4th September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to inform you of changes made in "Working together to improve attendance statutory guidance for maintained schools" document regarding penalty notices for absence of leave and persistent absences.

A request for absence of leave will not be granted for the purpose of a holiday unless deemed to be exceptional circumstances. If you do choose to take your child out of school during term time and it is not deemed exceptional circumstances and/or has not been approved by the school, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and a penalty notice will be issued.

A penalty notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children at their school under the following legislation.

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.
- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 4448 of the same act empowers the local authority to issue a penalty notice.
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Please note a penalty notice can also be issued if your child is seen in a public place within the first 5 days of an exclusion from school, as stated in Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. A penalty notice will be charged at £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Yours Sincerely



Mrs K Revill

Attendance Lead