



Children  
First Academy  
Trust

# Pupil Attendance Policy

Approved: Education and Standards Committee

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# Children First Academy Trust Pupil Attendance Policy

## 1. Introduction:

Within Children First Academy Trust a very high priority is placed on conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We are committed to providing a full educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is critical.

It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role that must be carried out in order to raise standards. Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. Any unauthorised absence is damaging to a child's education and it gives children the wrong messages about the importance of education which may lead to problems later in schooling and employment. Good attendance and punctuality are important values for later in life.

It is our policy of our school to grade our attendance using a traffic light system. This is a visual way for the parents, staff, governors and pupils to their attendance, we encourage our pupils to **Aim for Gold which is 100%**. **Red is for attendance below 90%**, **Amber is attendance between 90-94.9%**, **Green is for 95% and above.**

Evidence shows that poor attendance over the years of school life, is very closely linked to poor results at GCSE

### **17 days absence in a year results in a drop of one grade at GCSE over time**

Our aim is to reach our target for attendance is set at 96%. This is above the target set by the Department of Education which is 95%. we have aimed higher than the Department of Education's target of 95%. The table below shows how many days absence equates to each percentage.

<b>Attendance Percentage</b>	<b>Days missed over a school year</b>
100%	0 days
95%	10 days (2 weeks of school)
90%	20 days (4 weeks of school)
85%	30 days (6 weeks of school – approximately half a term)
80%	40 days (8 weeks of school)

Our policy reflects the DfE regulations which came into force in November 2016, which states that: Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances'. Therefore no holidays in term time will be authorised and a penalty warning letter/fine will be sent to the parents.

Children First Academy would interpret "exceptional" in this context as being of a unique and significant event or circumstance which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will be applied to each case but the normality will be that requests for authorised absence in term time will be refused.

It is explained to parents that, if a child is taken out of school during term time without permission, it may be that the child's registered school place may be terminated and the parent will have to re-apply for another school place on return.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to check the school's website and newsletters to confirm school holiday dates. If they are uncertain, they should contact the school directly to ask when the holidays dates are. No holidays should be committed to before checking that the dates are not in school time.

It is also the responsibility of the parent/carer to try and book any medical or other appointments for their child outside of school time, however, the Trust recognises that this is not always possible.

### **School's agreement:**

- To provide a safe learning environment
- To promote and encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To keep and maintain registers accurately
- To regularly analyse attendance data
- To report missing children to the LA
- To maintain a consistent approach to marking registers
- To commit to provide a full educational experience for all pupils
- To ensure that records of attendance are maintained on a daily basis, according to the government legislation and guidance
- To monitor attendance closely
- To follow up poor attendance or punctuality and persistent absence by inviting parents to have a meeting or a letter/phone call of concern
- To provide supportive, approachable staff for advice and guidance to parents and pupils at all times
- To acknowledge and celebrate a successful record of attendance
- To provide individual and class incentives to reward good attendance
- To provide end of year celebrations for pupils with 100% attendance with a personal trophy and certificate.
- To send encouragement postcards home for improving attendance and punctuality
- To provide annual reports to parents of their child's attendance
- To check all independent travellers and inform parent/carer at first instance if your child/ren has not arrived

### **2. The Parents / Carers:**

- To ensure that their child attends school regularly, be punctual, correctly equipped and dressed in full school uniform every day
- To inform the school on the first day of absence, giving full valid reasons for absence before 9am.
- Daily contact is expected between parents and the school when your child is absent, if you do not contact the school this will be followed by the attendance officer and absence will be unauthorised
- To provide medical evidence if requested to support absence
- To maintain regular communication with the school staff where necessary
- To inform the school of any changes to their contact details
- To avoid arranging medical / dental appointments during school hours
- To inform the school if a child travels alone to school as this will be checked and monitored daily by the attendance officer
- Not to book holidays during term time- if the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head teacher will determine the length of absence authorised. A leave of absence form should be completed in advanced and given to the attendance officer- Please remember to check the website and newsletter before booking a holiday
- To provide medical evidence after 3 days of absence or when requested at any time by the Attendance Officer
- To inform the school about any concerns or problems that might affect your child/ren's attendance and punctuality
- If your child independently travels to school (Walk, Bus) please inform the school in writing

## **The Pupils are expected**

- To attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctuality, comply to the school's rules and regulations
- To do their best in all their work to make good progress
- To be in full uniform
- To be fully equipped and organised
- To understand and comply with the school rules

## **Monitoring**

Attendance is monitored weekly for any emerging patterns below 95% and parents will be routinely contacted if attendance falls below 93%.

## **Authorised and Unauthorised absences**

### **Authorised absences include:**

- Leave granted by the Head Teacher (Exceptional circumstances only)
  - Religious day- Your Headteacher will authorise one day, absence will be coded as an R, should you request additional days, please complete a leave of absence form stating the dates.
  - The Pupil is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause \*
  - There is a family bereavement
  - The pupil is attending an approved off site activity or receiving special off site tuition
  - The pupil is attending a pupil referral unit
  - The pupil is participating in an approved public performance
- \*If your child/ren is unwell and is going to be absent from school, we expect that you inform the Attendance officer before 9am to report your child's absence. If you do not report your child absent before then, you will receive a text message to kindly remind you to call the school. If you do not contact the school your child's attendance will be unauthorised for that day.

### **Unauthorised absences include:**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school DOES NOT consider reasonable and/or for which no reason has been given by the Parent/ Carer or permission by the school. This includes:

- No explanation of absence is given
- No contact with the school \*
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- The pupil is off for unexceptional circumstances
- The pupil is off due to his/ her sibling being unwell
- Leave of absence being declined by the Head Teacher and the holiday is still taken
- Additional religious day taken
- Whole day taken off for a dental/medical appointment

\*Home visits will be carried out on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of non-engagement/no contact from the parents. Home visits are conducted by members of staff or with the Education Welfare Officer. Our allocated safer schools police officer may escort staff where appropriate.

## **Persistent absence**

Persistent absentees are pupils whose attendance is 90% or below. If your child/ren falls into the persistent absentee category, Parents/ Carers will be sent a Persistent Absence letter informing them of their child/ren's

poor attendance. Meetings will be arranged with the Attendance officer and be issued with a low level penalty warning letter as your child will be displaying concerning patterns.

Referrals to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will also be made for pupils whose attendance does not improve or if the parent/carer is failing to engage with the Attendance Officer.

Any teachers or member of support staff with concerns about a child's attendance should refer to the Attendance Officer in the first instance.

### **Punctuality:**

- ALL pupils are expected to arrive at school on time (as stated by each individual school)
- Pupils arriving to school 10 minutes after the registers have closed, will coded as L for late- 3 or more lates will trigger a letter and monitoring period
- Pupils arriving 20 minutes after the registers have closed with coded as a U for unauthorised late – an unauthorised late will be classed as an absence- 3 unauthorised lates or more will trigger a low-level penalty warning letter, meeting and possible referral to the EWO for further action
- Parent/carers are expected to collect their child/ren on time, should you be running late due to an unforeseen circumstance, please inform the school office as soon as possible
- You will receive a letter if 3 or more persistent late pickups and will be monitored

<b>Minutes lost each day</b>	<b>Days lost per school year</b>
5 minutes	3 days
10 minutes	6.5 days (over 1 weeks of school)
15 minutes	10 days (2 weeks of school)
20 minutes	13 days (over 2.5 weeks of school)
30 minutes	19 days (just under 4 weeks of school)

**Being late 10 minutes every day for one year is equal to 33 hours - approximately 6 days.**

### **Penalty Notices**

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 the school may refer the child to the Educational Welfare Officer from the Trust. He/she will also try to resolve the situation but if this fails these Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

If a child is regularly late, a letter will be issued to the parent. If the problem persists, a meeting will be arranged to discuss the matter.

Persistent unauthorised lates will trigger a low level penalty warning letter or a referral to the EWO.

There is clear guidance to parents that Head teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.

Parents of pupils with attendance below 90% will be contacted and if attendance is unexpectedly below 93%, referrals may be made to the Education Welfare Service.

If a parent wishes to contact the Educational Welfare Service to ask for advice or information themselves then the number is available from the School Office or by contacting the Local Authority.

### **A letter will be sent to the parents warning of a possible fine if a child:**

- Has had **6 unauthorised sessions** a warning letter will be sent at this stage informing of a possible fine if absences continue
- Attendance falls **below 90%**
- More than **6 unauthorised sessions** will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer

The Local Authority issues penalty notices on behalf of Enfield Schools to ensure consistency and in the event that a prosecution may need to be brought against the parents/ carers.

Should you receive a fine for persistent and unauthorised absences details of fine details are listed below:-

- 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 1996.
- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty. Payment of a Penalty notice is £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days; per parent, per child.
- Please note, you may also be at risk of losing your child's registered school place and you may not be able to find another school place immediately on your return. Should your child/ren fail to attend 20 school days (40 sessions) the school place will automatically be removed. Please provide evidence to support absence.

### **The role of the Trust Education welfare officer (EWO)**

The EWO role is to support schools, children and families to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Attendance officers will make a referral to the EWO for those parent/carers whose child/ren are not attending school on a regular basis. Welfare visits will also be conducted without notice if necessary.

When and how the EWO becomes involved:

The EWO will meet with parents to assess the situation and to discuss any concerns and reasons for poor attendance when:

- Attendance falls below 90% or 6 or more unauthorised absences/unauthorised lates
- There is disengagement with the school/attendance officers
- Fails to attend meetings
- Failure to secure, maintain and sustain good attendance/punctuality for your child
- Consistent persistent absences or poor unauthorised lates
- If children are taken out of school to go on holiday
- When 6 unauthorised sessions (3 days) have been recorded over a 4-week period

The EWO will arrange a meeting when necessary to discuss strategies for how to improve the child's attendance. An opportunity will be given to improve attendance by giving a monitoring period of 4-6 weeks. After this point the EWO will review and re-assess the child/rens attendance to make the decision as to whether further action is required

Further action by the EWO:

- Parental prosecution- if both parents have parental responsibility, both will be prosecuted. Failure to pay the fine within 21 days will mean that Education welfare services will proceed to court without further notice. Fine increases to £2,500
- Attend a Court assessment hearing (CAM)- Failure to secure good attendance after the monitoring period
- Magistrates court for prosecution
- 3-month prison
- Education supervision orders
- Referrals to relevant services/professionals
- Unannounced welfare visits

### **Definition of "Parent"**

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" to include:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not; and
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

### **Application for leave of absence for a pupil in term time**

#### **Important Information for Parents/Carers**

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 no longer permit Head Teachers to authorise leave for **holidays**.
- Head Teachers may grant leave of absence if they consider **exceptional** circumstances apply. This is seen as an urgent and unavoidable response to family circumstances which cannot be resolved or delayed. This absence is only authorised with written evidence of the reason for absence. This could be critical illness of a close relative, bereavement or another family crisis.
- **If** the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised.
- Requests for Leave of Absence should be made in advance by completing a 'Leave of Absence Form' before any arrangements are confirmed or money committed.
- If Leave of Absence is granted please contact the school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress.
- This form **MUST** be completed by the resident parent(s)/carer(s) before requests will be considered.

- Failure to make a request for a Leave of Absence in advance will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

***Please note: Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.***

***The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 state:***

- Head Teachers **shall not grant any** leave of absence during term time **unless:**
- An application has been made in advance, by the parent with whom the child normally resides  
**AND**
- They consider there to be exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- The Head Teacher must be satisfied that exceptional circumstances warrant the granting of a leave of absence.
- The Head Teacher can determine how long an absence should be and any additional absence will not be authorised.
- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education through regular attendance at a school or otherwise (i.e. home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996).
- If a child who is of compulsory school age, who is registered at school and fails to attend regularly, it is the parent that will be guilty of an offence (Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996).
- Parents whose children have unauthorised absence may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution.
- Any Fixed Penalty Notices issued and/or prosecution will apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend school. The costs are £60 per child per parent.

**Parents:**

- The application must be made in advance by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with.
- Any leave of absences taken which have not been requested in advance will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Parents can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecuted for unauthorised absence including holidays.

Please find useful statics table below for lateness and absences.

