



# Attendance Policy

## **Statement of Intent**

Folkestone St. Mary's C.E. Primary Academy is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Principal and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Folkestone St. Mary's C.E. Primary Academy

## **Parental Responsibility**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend education regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

**It is the parents' responsibility to contact the academy on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that the child is safe.**

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8:45 am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

## **The Role of the Academy Staff**

The Principal has overall responsibility for attendance, but delegates this to the Inclusion Officer.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The office staff confirm at 09:15 am and 1:30 pm that all registers have been completed.

It is the responsibility of Attendance Team

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence and continue to do so until contact has been made.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents informed three times a year of their child's attendance figure

## **Timeline of School Action for Poor Attendance**

**Attendance admin lead will communicate on a weekly basis the attendance rates of each child to the class teachers.**

**Group 1: 96.1% or higher.** Class teacher regularly praises children for good attendance. Postcards, attendance prizes and certificates.

**Groups 2: 95-96%.** Class teacher informs parent if attendance falls towards threshold.

**Group 3: 93-94.9%.** Formal letter and meeting arranged to discuss strategies and communicate legal responsibilities with a member of the SLT. Pre-referral meeting arranged with the local authority and possible early help and other pastoral services

**Group 4: < 92.9%.** Meet with Head Teacher and attendance referral representative. Medical evidence required. Possibility of a penalty notice

Fortnightly attendance meetings will ensure that all pupils are tracked robustly.

### **Children Missing Education**

No child may be removed from the Academy roll without consultation between the Principal and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

### **Children Missing in Education**

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Principal or the Inclusion and Attendance Service if appropriate. Please see circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

### **Lateness**

At Folkestone St. Mary's C.E. Primary Academy, the register is taken at 8.45 am and 1.15 pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

### **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness – Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices current Code of Conduct**

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions for a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

### **Authorising Absence**

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Head Teacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill

- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **MUST** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

**Local Authority Action may include:-**

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

**Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance - Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education current Penalty Notices Code of Conduct**

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of persistent unauthorised absence or where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- Absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive.
- The PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

**Exceptional circumstances could include:**

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable', it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Head Teachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

**Leave of Absence/Holiday**

From September 2013, the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Head Teacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Head Teacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

**Appendix 1 Group 3 letter <95%**

**Appendix 2 Group 4 letter <93%**

**Appendix 3 Medical evidence request**

**Appendix 4 Lateness 'L'**

**Appendix 5 Lateness 'U'**

**Appendix 6 Holiday request unauthorised Penalty Notice Warning Letter**

**Appendix 7 Holiday request unauthorised No Penalty Notice Warning Letter**

**Appendix 8 Non notification Holiday letter**

**Appendix 9 School Based Intervention Flow Chart**

## Appendix 1

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been absent from school resulting in their attendance falling below 95%. Please contact the school should you wish to see a copy of these absences.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on valuable experiences while they are away but they are also less prepared for future lessons when they return. Good attendance is vital to success in education and building long term habits for the future.

100% Attendance = 0 days missed
95% Attendance = 9 days missed = up to <b>45</b> lessons missed
90% Attendance = 18 days missed
85% Attendance = 27 days missed = up to <b>135</b> lessons missed
80% Attendance = 36 days missed
75% Attendance = 45 days missed = up to <b>225</b> lessons missed

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve «forename»'s attendance. Your child's phase leader will be in contact to arrange a meeting to review these absences and see if we can help in any way to get the attendance back in line with the school's expectations.

I hope to hear of improvement within the next four to six weeks and look forward to sharing that success with you. Should things remain a concern, I will review this again with you personally and consider referring the case to the School Liaison officers at Kent County Council to ensure the right support is in place for your child.

Thank you in advance or you support.

Yours sincerely

Mr. T. North  
Principal

## Appendix 2

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re: «forename» «surname»**

Despite previous warnings, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement and is now below 93%. «forename»'s attendance at school is currently «percentage\_attendance»% which means «he\_she» has missed «total\_authorized\_absences» half day sessions for authorised absence and «total\_unauthorised\_absences» half day sessions for unauthorised absence. This will have a serious impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been little improvement in «forename»'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness will require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a pre referral meeting. The meeting will be attended by myself or another member of the school senior leadership team and may be attended by the local school liaison officer. It is important that you and «forename» attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance.

The school office will contact you in the next few days to arrange an appointment time.

If you are unable to agree a time or attend this meeting and «forename»'s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral will be made to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. T. North  
Principal

## Appendix 3

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

*Please be advised that this letter is generated automatically. If we are already working with you and are aware of your circumstances, please take this into consideration.*

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been absent from school. Their attendance is currently at «percentage\_attendance»%; below the 93% threshold. Please contact the school should you wish to see a copy of these absences.

I am sorry that your child has been unwell, but I must ask that if any further absence occurs, that you can demonstrate why «forename» has been absent. Some examples of evidence that could be used are: Prescriptions, Appointment Cards, Doctor's Notes, etc. This evidence should be presented at the Academy Office so that the absence can be authorised and avoid a possible Penalty Notice.

Should you need advice on the evidence please contact the Academy Office.

Thank you in advance for your support,

Yours sincerely,

Mr. T. North  
Principal



## Appendix 4

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been arriving late at school. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code L):

«dates\_of\_lates\_before»

Total lates before registration closed: «total\_lates\_before» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at **8.45** am.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for your child.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Mr. T. North  
Principal

## Appendix 5

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has arrived after the register has been closed. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code U):

«dates\_of\_lates\_after»

Total lates after registration closed: «total\_lates\_after» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at **8.45** am and is closed at **9.15** am for the morning session. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

If «forename» continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Mr. T. North  
Principal

## Appendix 6

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

### **Request for leave during Term-Time For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»**

I have received your request to take «forename» out of school for a family holiday between **??date** and **??date**, a total of **??Number** of school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will **not** be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

In order to support the families as much as possible, I do take good attendance and support for the school as evidence for the panel. As xxxx is already below our expectations of good attendance, if you decide to take **xxxxxxx** out of school for this period of time, the absence will be registered as unauthorised and may result in a penalty notice being issued. I must also take this opportunity to inform you that **where a child has 10 unauthorised sessions within a 100 school session period, a Penalty Notice may be issued.**

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «forename» out of school we will consider making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to **each parent of each child** and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Mr. T. North  
Principal

## Appendix 7

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

### **Request for leave during Term-Time For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»**

I have received your request to take «forename» out of school for a family holiday between **??date** and **??date**, a total of **??Number** of school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will **not** be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

In order to support the families as much as possible, I do take good attendance and support for the school as evidence for the panel. As xxxx has good attendance and shows a positive attitude to schooling, if you decide to take **xxxxxxx** out of school for this period of time, the absence will be registered as unauthorised but a penalty notice **will not** be issued. I must also take this opportunity to inform you that where a child has **10 unauthorised sessions** within a 100 school session period, a **Penalty Notice may be issued.** Therefore further absences will be monitored closely.

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised.

Penalty Notices are issued to **each parent of each child** and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Mr. T. North  
Principal

## Appendix 8

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence, except in exceptional circumstances.

Requests for holidays in term-time will **not** be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively therefore this absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence, where a child has 10 unauthorised sessions within 100 school session a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty instead of being prosecuted for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The amount of the penalty is £120 per parent, per child, but if payment is made by you within 21 days of receipt of this Notice it will be £60 per parent, per child. If you pay this penalty within the time limits, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence, i.e. your liability for the offence will be discharged.

If you feel that the holiday was justified please do come and discuss it with me.

Yours sincerely

Mr. T. North  
Principal

# School based absence intervention

