

# Forest Glade Primary School



## Attendance Policy 2022-2025



***'Research proves that great attendance ensures great progress and success!'***

We believe that:

- children need to attend school regularly so they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available;
- poor attendance rates and persistent lateness undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage.

**Aims**

Therefore, we aim to:

- take all reasonable steps to maximise attendance rates;
- actively discourage late arrival;
- be consistent in the application of the school's registration and attendance procedures.

**Legal Framework**

It is recognised that parents, schools and Local Authorities have statutory responsibilities with regard to school attendance.

**It is important to know that a child with 90% attendance loses nearly four weeks of school every year and 24 weeks by year 6 SATs. This increases to one whole year lost by year 11 GCSEs.**

**Parental Responsibility**

Parents are required to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education and are therefore primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school.

Thus, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children:

- attend school regularly;
- arrive at school on time, in uniform and in a condition to learn;
- are absent only for reasons that can be authorised.

Parents are required to inform the school of the reason for any absence and the likely return date, as soon as possible.

If a child is a persistent absentee (attendance less than 90%), the family may be fined. This would be implemented after discussions with the family and after giving a reasonable period of time to improve. The Headteacher will take into account individual circumstances of each case before making a decision to fine.

**Registration**

The school keeps an attendance register on Scholar Pack for each class in which pupils are marked present or absent at the beginning of each school session (am and pm).

**Reporting Absence**

- Parents are asked to make contact on the first day of absence, where possible - by note, personal contact, telephone call or e-mail - informing the school of the reason for the absence and/or nature of any illness. They are also asked to inform the school if there is a likely return date;
- If the school has not heard from the family by 9:00am, a member of staff will attempt to contact home to ascertain the reason for absence;
- If contact cannot be made, we follow a flow chart of procedures to ensure that children are safe and well, the flow chart can be seen at the end of this policy;
- Notes received by teachers are dated and initialled and sent to the office to be retained until the end of the academic year. The absence is logged as either Authorised Absence or Unauthorised Absence on the Scholar Pack system;

- Telephone messages and personal contacts made to the school office are noted on the Scholar Pack system and subsequently logged as either Authorised Absence or Unauthorised Absence. Personal contacts made with class teachers should subsequently be logged on the Scholar Pack register within the notes section;
- Any absence that may be considered Unauthorised Absence should only be recorded after discussion with the Headteacher;
- Any queries as to whether to Authorise an absence or not should be referred to the Headteacher.

### **Authorising Absence**

The law states that only the school can approve absence, not parents. If doubts remain about the explanation offered - or where no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence must be treated as unauthorised.

**Headteachers are not permitted to authorise holiday absences. A penalty notice will be issued if a child is taken out of school for an unauthorised absence. In Nottinghamshire the agreed threshold is any unauthorised absence of more than 3 days, or six sessions over a six-week period.**

Codes used to denote absence are shown in the document 'School Attendance – Guidance for Schools' which can be viewed by clicking on the link at the end of this policy.

Absence will be authorised immediately or retrospectively if:

- the pupil was absent due to illness;
- the pupil had leave of absence granted by the Headteacher;
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
- the absence was due to a medical or dental appointment.

In addition, the school will consider authorising absence in the following cases:

- family bereavement;
- attending wedding (1 day only);
- moving house;
- external music examination;
- special tuition/events.

The school will not authorise absence in the following cases:

- shopping during school hours;
- children looking after brothers and sisters;
- children minding the house during school hours;
- children avoiding aspects of the curriculum (games, swimming, visits, etc) whether condoned by parents or not;
- all holiday leave in term time.

Parents wishing to request a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances, should complete an application form which can be obtained from the school office. In each case the Headteacher will consider the request, writing to the family explaining that the exceptional absence days will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised and explaining the reasons.

### **Persistent Absentees**

Persistent absence rates are counted as anything below 90%. The school may contact any family where the child has more than 3 days consecutive absence without a medical note in any 6 week period. Or, whose attendance over a 6 week period is less than the 90%.

- In the first instance, the Headteacher may write or make a telephone call to the parents and invite the parents into school to discuss the absence, discussing the barriers and any support the school could offer, this could include creating an Attendance Management Plan for the family to support improvement;
- Following this, if no improvements are made, the Headteacher may write to the parents to inform them that no further absences will be authorised without medical evidence and a fine may be issued at this point;
- The Headteacher may involve the Education Welfare Officer if the child's attendance does not improve;
- The Education Welfare Officer may issue a fine on the schools behalf;
- Every effort will be made between the school and the family to ensure the child's attendance improves. The Headteacher will take into account individual circumstances of each case before making a decision to fine.

### **Lateness**

We recognise that persistent lateness is:

- ✓ detrimental to the child's education
- ✓ administratively disruptive to poor preparation for future schooling and adult life.

Morning school starts at 8.45am:

- If pupils arrive after 8.45am and before 9.00am they receive a late mark L and need to be signed in late via the school office.
- Pupils arriving after 9.00am will sign in late at the office and receive a mark which denotes 'Late after the register is closed' U which counts as an unauthorised absence.
- Afternoon registration starts at 1.10pm for KS1 and 1.20pm for KS2. The registers are closed immediately after registration.
- Pupils arriving after afternoon registration sign in late at the office and receive a mark which denotes 'Late after the register is closed' U which counts as an unauthorised absence.
- Parents whose children regularly arrive late will receive a warning letter from school. Cases may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

### **Mid-Session Arrivals/Departures**

It is recognised that children may arrive or depart mid-session for a variety of reasons which may be authorised:

- ✓ illness or accident in school resulting in a child going home;
  - ✓ medical or dental appointments;
  - ✓ unavoidable delays or reasons to leave early.
- Pupils present for registration who leave early, or for part of a session, should be noted on the Mid-Session Arrivals/Departure Log in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation. The register itself is not altered.
  - Pupils not present for registration who return later from an appointment should be noted on the Mid-Session Arrivals/Departure Log in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation. The register is subsequently amended to authorise the absence or record an unauthorised absence.

### **Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality**

Attendance is monitored at the end of each half term to look for:

- patterns of unexplained absences;
- any persistent lateness;
- any prolonged absence;
- any unexplained patterns of authorised absence;

- any pupil in the threshold of 95-91%, will be offered support and action planning alongside the pupil and family to improve attendance;
- attendance below 90% (including late after registration is closed could lead to prosecution).

Summaries of Attendance rates are prepared termly and annually for all children showing:

- the total number of pupils on roll at any time during the period;
- the total number of possible pupils sessions;
- the number of authorised absences and the number of children affected;
- the number of unauthorised absences and the number of children affected;
- the percentage of pupils sessions lost by authorised and unauthorised absences.

Year on Year summaries are retained for comparison and class registers are retained for a minimum of seven years.

Attendance and Punctuality Reports are given termly to governors, outlining the attendance and punctuality rates.

Individual Attendance and Punctuality Reports are sent home with a child's end of year report praising those with high levels of attendance and punctuality and commenting on those with unsatisfactory levels. Copies of pupil attendance overviews are also given to parents during parents evening if there is a need to discuss the pupil's current attendance and to support the family if necessary.

### **Rewarding Good Attendance**

Although we acknowledge that absence is rarely the fault of a child, we believe it is important to celebrate those who have been a good attender:

- Any pupil achieving 100% for a half term will receive a certificate;
- The class with the best weekly attendance is celebrated in our celebration assembly;
- Our attendance display in the hall will promote and raise awareness of attendance to raise aspiration.

### **Supporting Families**

A Family Support worker supports pupils and families with attendance. This includes:

- meeting with families needing support with attendance/dropping below 90%;
- creating Attendance Action Plans;
- liaising with Early Help;
- home visits;
- supporting the school office with the attendance process;
- supporting vulnerable pupils with attendance.

### **Children Missing Education**

Anyone concerned that a child is missing education (CME) must make a referral to: Children Missing Officer (CMO) Glen Scruby 01623 433170 [glen.scruby@nottsgov.uk](mailto:glen.scruby@nottsgov.uk)

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity, e.g. school, alternative provision, elective home education, and has been out of education provision for at least 4 weeks'.

CME also includes those children who are missing (family whereabouts unknown) and are usually children who are registered on a school roll/alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address and either has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or left school suddenly and the destination is unknown.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>