



Attendance Policy

Autumn 2025

Rise to the Challenge

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and draws from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

*Part 6 of The Education Act
1996 Part 3 of The Education
Act 2002*

*Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010,
2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)*

1. Statement of Intent

At Foxton Primary School we believe that regular and consistent attendance plays a major role in the quality of learning for each of our pupils. Whilst 100% attendance is the ideal, we do recognise that children have time off due to illness, medical appointments, out of school learning opportunities etc. This policy is intended to set out what is expected within school regarding the minimum attendance required of all pupils, the procedures for monitoring and challenging poor attendance and late arrivals.

Aims of the policy

- To encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance of above 97%.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with Foxton Primary School including pupils, parents/carers, teachers and governors.
- To maximise attendance across the school population and reduce persistent absenteeism (below 90%).
- To work together with parents/carers in both a supportive and challenging role to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

2. Expectations for Attendance

We expect all children at Foxton to maintain a **95% attendance rate** on an annual basis. All attendance below this threshold will be monitored and those children with lower than 90% attendance will have their attendance challenged.

Why good Attendance is important

Good attendance is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. Research shows that the students with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 have higher rates of attendance compared to those with the lowest attainment.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to:

- To attend school regularly and to arrive on time.
- Come to school properly equipped and prepared to learn.
- Talk to a member of staff if there is a problem causing them to miss school.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance at school in accordance with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. They should ensure that:

- Their child attends regularly and is punctual, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- They inform the school of the reason for any absence by via telephone. The school will then make the decision to either authorise or unauthorise the absence. If no reason is given, the absence will be automatically unauthorised.
- They know that they will not have holidays authorised during term time.
- They make medical and dental appointments outside school time whenever possible. Where this is not possible, parents/carers should get the school's agreement in advance and ensure the pupil is out of school for a minimum amount of time necessary.
- They give the school up to date information (and evidence when requested) regarding diagnosed medical conditions which may affect attendance.
- They provide the school with up to date contact details.

FOXTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

As a school we will:

- Strive to provide a welcoming, calm, orderly, safe and caring environment whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's parent/carer's concerns.
- Establish an effective system of incentives and rewards to recognise the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping.
- Challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise all young people who fall below the DfE threshold of 90% attendance as Persistent Absentees and will treat them as a vulnerable group of pupils who warrant additional support.
- Share key reminders of our Attendance Policy at the start of each academic year and with children who join the school on mid-term transfers from another setting.
- Track attendance on an individual and cohort level.

Governors

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3. Procedures regarding absence from school

1. Parents are requested to inform school of their child's absence (due to illness, appointment or other non-prearranged reasons) each day, before 9am. This should be via telephone, email or in person via the school office. The office staff will contact parents if no such contact is made. We do this as part of our Safeguarding agenda.
2. A reason for absence is marked in the attendance register in accordance with the administrative codes.
3. In the event of absence for a dentist or doctor's appointment, parents have a responsibility to inform school in advance, by means of an email or a phone call to the office, so that the absence can be coded as 'medical'.

Understanding Types of Absence

Students are expected to attend the school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised absence:** this is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. See Appendix 2 for examples of authorised absences other than illness or medical/dental appointments.
- **Unauthorised absence:** this is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence following a parent's request.

Absence Examples:

Authorised absences	Unauthorised absences
- genuine illness of the pupil; hospital/dental/doctor appointment for the pupil; - major religious observances - visits to prospective new schools - external exams or educational assessments	- shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park; a birthday treat; - oversleeping due to a late night; - looking after other children / other family member; - appointments for other family members - holidays during term time

The school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence that they have been on holiday.

If the authenticity of an illness is in doubt, the school may ask the child's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation of Attendance

If children do not arrive in school and school has not received any notification of absence by email or telephone, admin staff will then contact parents or carers, until we get a response.

Contact will be made firstly via text message and then by telephone to each contact we have on our system, in order of priority.

Attendance is recorded each day and then collated and monitored on a daily, half termly, termly and yearly basis by our Attendance team: George Norman (Head) and Emma Freer (Attendance admin) (please contact via email marked 'Attendance': office@foxton.leics.sch.uk)

This is shared with our Attendance Officer at Leicestershire County Council and an Action Plan is drawn up to support parents/carers of children who are persistently absent (with the exception of where a plan of support is not appropriate e.g. term time holidays).

The DfE definition of Persistent Absence is attendance below 90%. Children who fall below the 90% attendance threshold will receive a letter from the school highlighting their poor attendance and offering support/targets for improvement. If attendance does not improve, a follow up letter will be sent, requesting evidence of the reasons for absence e.g. proof of medical appointments.

If poor attendance continues, cases may be escalated through the Attendance Officer and fines may be issued– see '**Penalty Notices**' section.

In some extreme cases, legal action will be taken.

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (WTISA)

From August 2024, WTISA aims are statutory. New regulations have come into force regarding unauthorised leave of absence from school. The aims of the changes are explained by DfE as follows:

- Make penalty notices more effective by ensuring they are only used in cases where they are the most appropriate tool to change parental behaviour and improve attendance.
- Prioritise the support first approach by expecting support to be used in cases where it is appropriate and using penalty notices in cases where support is not appropriate (e.g., a term time holiday) or support has not been engaged with.
- Improve consistency in the use of penalty notices across England by introducing a **new national threshold of 5 days of unauthorised absences in a 10-week period.**
- Improve the deterrent effect of a penalty notice by increasing the amount of the fine and introducing a new national limit of 2 penalty notices within a 3-year period to break cycles of repeat offending.

Safeguarding

Where a child is not attending school, cannot be traced/contact cannot be made with the parents or has moved without a forwarding address, we are required to inform the local authority that the child is missing. The school may carry out a home visit (after the third day) and refer the family to social care and the police to ensure any concerns for the child's welfare have been thoroughly investigated. Pupils will not be removed from the school roll until notified by the Local Authority that their enquires are complete.

If we cannot get a response from any contact on our system and this is a family/child who has social care involvement we would contact the social worker. If the family is not known to social care but they are a family we are monitoring for safeguarding concerns, we would contact the Attendance Officer and request a home visit.

A referral will be made to the Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of the absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point the child will be deemed to be 'missing in education'.

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. Foxtton Primary School recognises that children missing in education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, child sexual and criminal exploitation. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Requests for Leave of Absence / Holidays

Foxtton Primary School believe that any absence from school disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress and should be avoided. **Any requests for time off for a holiday will not be authorised.**

However, we do recognise that there may be times when a pupil requires exceptional leave during term time for short periods of time (e.g. attending a close family funeral or wedding). In these circumstances, a 'Leave Of Absence' request should be completed. This application should be completed by the parent with whom the child normally resides. The Head Teacher will then formally respond to this request in writing. Prior and current attendance will influence the ultimate school response and decision and if leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time a pupil can have away from school.

If parents/carers still choose to remove their child/ren for a family holiday, parents have the responsibility to inform the school in writing in advance. Depending upon the following criteria the Family of Schools Attendance Officer may become involved and a Penalty Notice (see below) may be issued if:

1. A child has poor attendance below the 90% threshold (e.g. a number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year or one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission)
2. A child is already subject to attendance improvement support from the school and Attendance Officer involvement.
3. When threshold is reached (5 days of unauthorised absences in a 10-week period), the Attendance Officer will inform the Local Authority who will in turn fine **each parent** for **each child** absent. See '**Penalty Notices**' section below for more details.

Penalty Notices

For unauthorised leave of absence from August 2024, Penalty Notices will increase to £160 per parent per child (discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days). If there is occasion to issue a second Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence within a rolling 3-year period, it will be issued at the higher rate of £160 per parent per child, with no opportunity to pay at the lower level. A Penalty Notice cannot be issued if there is a third occasion of unauthorised leave of absence in the rolling 3-year period and it is highly likely that the local authority will take direct prosecution action in the Magistrates' Court.

If your child has unauthorised leave of absence of 5 days or more prior to the end of the summer term it is likely you will be issued with a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child (discounted to £60 if paid within 21 days).

5. Monitoring and evaluation of 'Lateness'

If children miss the beginning of the school day they are likely to miss important instructions that are key to learning, cause disruption to the lesson for others and it can be embarrassing for them.

The school SIMS computer system can identify children who frequently arrive to school late. The office staff also keep a log of 'late' arrivals.

The day starts at 8.50am at which time the children are collected from the playground. If children arrive late, after registers have closed at 9.05am, this will be recorded as 'late' up until 9.20am, at which point it is an 'unauthorised absence'. *This is a DfE requirement on schools and will be monitored by the Attendance Officer in the same way as any other unauthorised absence.*

Afternoon registration is at 1pm.

Persistent lateness, below 90%, will be challenged and referred to the Attendance Officer. A standard letter will be sent home to parents/ carers highlighting frequent late arrival to school and its impact upon learning. Occasionally, this conversation might be verbal, for example at Parents Evenings.

Persistent lateness will be discussed with our Attendance Team and the Attendance Officer each half term, an action plan put into place and steps taken to address this if no improvement is observed. This might be via support for the family e.g. a discussion around the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved.

Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and a referral to the county Inclusion Team might be made if no progress is made following discussions with parents and supportive measures put into place. This will also be recorded on annual reports and passed to future schools, if needed.

6. How we support good attendance and punctuality

At Foxton Primary School we use a range of strategies to support attendance:

- Working together with parents to address any in-school barriers to attendance
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners will work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need (e.g. meeting with pupils and parents and agreeing an action plan)
- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this may include a voluntary referral to Early Help for assessment
- Individual attendance figures are reported to parents at Parents' Evenings and at the end of the year in school reports. Whole school attendance figures are reported to the Governors termly
- Incentives and Rewards used (see below):

Incentives and Rewards: What do we do?

At Foxton, we recognise and celebrate good attendance, and endeavour to incentivise those whose attendance requires improvement.

Individual Recognition

Children who achieve 100% attendance throughout the academic year will receive recognition through receiving a certificate in an end-of-year assembly, thus, not only celebrating individual achievements but also setting a benchmark for others to strive for consistent attendance.

Weekly Class Trophy

The class with the highest attendance each week will be awarded the Attendance Trophy, which will be awarded in weekly Celebration Assemblies. This reward system will foster a sense of camaraderie within classes and motivate pupils to attend regularly, in order to contribute to their class's success.

Half-Term Reward

The class with the highest attendance each half-term will be rewarded with a small prize, e.g. a book for their book corner, or sweets. Once again, this will be awarded during the final Celebration Assembly of that half-term.

All of the above incentives and rewards will be featured in the monthly newsletter to showcase the importance of good attendance to parents and carers.

By implementing these initiatives, Foxton can create a culture where attendance is valued and celebrated, both within the school community and amongst parents and carers. Regular communication about attendance achievements through assemblies, newsletters and awards fosters accountability, and encourages continuous improvement in attendance rates.

My child is struggling to attend the school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best tackled through partnership with the school, parents/carers and of course, in discussion with the child. If a child is reluctant to attend school, excusing their absence or giving in to pressure from them to be excused from school, is rarely a long-term solution. On the contrary, this gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make school avoidance more of a problem.

Contact your child's teacher immediately and be open about your worries. Your child could be avoiding the school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, friendship issues, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional such as a doctor, Early Help or the Attendance Officer

What can I do to encourage punctuality and good attendance?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest and the way that you talk about school, that you value their education.

7. SEND Children and those with Medical Needs / Behaviour sanctions

Foxton Primary School recognises that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. This can include children whose needs have been identified on an Educational Health Care Plan, those with long-term medical conditions or those who have special

education needs and disabilities. School will deal with attendance sensitively, put reasonable adjustments into place and consider whether additional support is needed. If a pupil's attendance becomes a cause for concern, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence to substantiate their reasons before any absence can be authorised.

Part-time timetables

Should a child struggle to cope with the demands of a full-time timetable, a part-time timetable may be implemented. This is agreed in conjunction with outside agencies such as Oakfield, Birkett House or the Educational Psychologist. This is the responsibility of the SENCO, in liaison with the Headteacher, educational professionals and the class teacher. The SENCO will inform the Inclusion Team.

Mid-year moves

Should a child leave school mid-year e.g. due to family relocation, the Office will inform the Inclusion Team.

Appendix 1: Other Types of Absence

Religious observance

Where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the college will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television-work and modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from the colleges for their child to take part in a performance. Authorisation will be at the Head's discretion and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from the school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. Authorisation will be at the Head's discretion and they will wish to discuss the nature and frequency of the absence with you and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Head and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away, the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.