



## New Forest Small School

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Member of Staff Responsible	Headteacher
Regularity of Review	2 yearly

#### **RATIONALE**

Regular attendance by all pupils is both a legal requirement and essential for consistent progress and achievement. This is necessary to maintain high levels of commitment among pupils to their own learning and their belief in the value of membership of the school as a community. Attendance is also a key safeguarding issue, in that poor attendance may be an indicator of abuse or other well-being concerns.

#### **PRACTICE**

#### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RECORDING AND CHECKING OF ATTENDANCE**

It is the responsibility of every class teacher to complete an accurate register that clearly records those pupils who are present and any who are absent. Head Teachers will examine attendance records daily to check on accuracy and completeness. Where there are matters of concern the Head Teachers will communicate with the teacher concerned.

#### **PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING ATTENDANCE**

Every pupil will register with their teacher at 9.45 am and 2.15pm.

The teacher is responsible for calling the register and recording attendance in the class register, and by 10.00am and 2.30pm at the latest. Lesson registration should be completed in the first 20 minutes of each session.

In the event of the class teacher not knowing the reason for absence, the Head Teacher must complete the reason for absence at the end of each day.

#### **PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ABSENCE**

First day absence calls are made for all pupils, unless otherwise notified.

In the event of concern about an absence from a lesson, the subject teacher must inform the Head Teacher. This will then be followed up by the Head Teacher.

## **HOME AND SCHOOL LINKS**

Reasons for all absences are required from parents/carers. The preferred method is an email on the first day of absence by 10am.

Emails, which excuse a pattern of poor attending, should be stored in a pupil's file, as these may be needed for any further action that is taken. E-mails which appear to condone absences must be referred to the Head Teacher in order for contact with the home to be made.

## **HOLIDAYS TAKEN IN TERM TIME**

Extended absence from school caused by families taking their annual holiday during term time is strongly discouraged. Parents are advised of the school's view that such loss of teaching will be detrimental to the progress of their children, especially in the upper secondary years.

For pupils in Kindergarten and school years 1-9, requests for extended absence during term time should normally be submitted in writing to the Head Teacher at least a month in advance, unless the request is to attend a funeral or other special family occasion that could not have been foreseen in advance. They will be considered on an individual basis and may be denied at the discretion of the Head Teacher. If absolutely necessary, the school will authorise a maximum of one week's holiday per year. Any additional holiday during term time will automatically be treated as unauthorised.

For pupils in years 10 and 11, family holidays will not be authorised. Absences of two days or more will be authorised only in exceptional circumstances (such as funerals held overseas, or visits with a specific educational purpose) and should be kept to a minimum.

In the event that absence during term-time is authorised, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children complete any additional homework tasks set by teachers to cover the lessons that they will be missing. If this is not achieved to the satisfaction of the Head Teacher, any future requests for family holidays during term-time will automatically be refused, and if parents still proceed to take their children out of school, the resulting absence will be treated as unauthorised.

## **VALUING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

Teachers should praise pupils whose attendance is consistently good or those who make an effort to attend.

The termly tallies states Attendance Achieved for school records and places high importance on attendance levels, especially in the pupil's final year.

Subject teachers also have a role in praising good attendance as one way of keeping up with work and gaining maximum benefit from the many curricular opportunities.

## **PUPILS WHO ARE SUBJECTED TO LENGTHY ABSENCE**

It will be natural for pupils who are absent for a long period to feel isolated from their school.

Where this is the case, arrangements are made for work to be sent home and for pupils to visit to allow some feeling of 'being in touch' to take place.

Head Teachers will normally take responsibility for these contacts to be made and continued throughout the period of absence.

## **REINTEGRATION STRATEGIES**

It is accepted that some absence will be caused by domestic, social or school based reasons. Where this is the case the school will work closely with the home and the pupil to help overcome difficulties, ensuring that any potential safeguarding issues are closely monitored in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Strategies that help to establish the pupil as a full attendee will be employed and this may involve part time attendance or flexi-schooling initially, on a case-by-case basis.

When a pupil returns to school, effective monitoring of attendance, academic performance and social integration will need to be undertaken by the Head Teacher.

Pupils with a record of truancy who return to school should be quietly welcomed back and efforts made to reintegrate them fully into the life of the school.

## **FLEXI-SCHOOLING**

"Flexi-schooling" or "flexible school attendance" is an arrangement between the parent and the school where the child is registered at school and attends the school only part time; the rest of the time, the child is home educated (on authorised absence from school). Flexi-schooling is not the same as temporary part-time absence where full reintegration is expected.

NFSS allows flexi-schooling in the primary years, either on a long-term basis or as a short-term measure for a particular reason, if it is agreed in advance by the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead after an interview with the parents/carers. Full-time attendance is a requirement by secondary age, although on rare occasions where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, part-time attendance may be more appropriate for a specified period of time. For more information on the management of flexi-schooling, and the Flexi-Schooling Agreement to be completed by, refer to the separate Flexi-Schooling Policy.

## **OFF-SITE PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

On occasion, children may be given permission to attend off-site physical education activities offered by external providers, in place of the PE provision offered by the school. Requests should be made in writing to the Head Teacher, enclosing a full description of the activity and the provider, a copy of the provider's up-to-date Extended DBS certificate, and an appropriate and up-to-date certificate of insurance. The school reserves the right to refuse such requests if there are any concerns about safeguarding or the professional standards of the provider.

## **PERSISTENT LATECOMERS**

Pupils and/or parents of pupils who arrive persistently late will be spoken to by the Head Teacher. Further sanctions are applied if a pupil continues to arrive late, in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy..

## **SAFE KEEPING OF ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE REGISTERS**

Attendance registers are kept electronically as password-protected files on class desktop computers and selected staff members' mobile phones. They will not be accessed via mobile phones outside registration times except for specific administrative reasons or fire drill or off-site outings.

## **MONITORING**

The Head Teachers will monitor this policy and its practices.

Head Teachers will monitor attendance termly, highlighting the school's current attendance percentage and discussing actions and/or support for pupils with attendance recorded at 80% or below.

## CONCERNS

Where the Head Teacher has concerns about attendance she will contact the parents via whatever means necessary in the first instance to discuss the concern.

DSLs and staff will consider:

Missing lessons: Are there patterns in the lessons that are being missed? Is this more than avoidance of a subject or a teacher? Does the child remain on the school site or are they absent from the site?

- Is the child being sexually exploited during this time?
- Are they late because of a caring responsibility?
- Have they been directly or indirectly affected by substance misuse?
- Are other students routinely missing the same lessons, and does this raise other risks or concerns?
- Is the lesson being missed one that would cause bruising or injuries to become visible?

Single missing days: Is there a pattern in the day missed? Is it before or after the weekend suggesting the child is away from the area? Are there specific lessons or members of staff on these days? Is the parent informing the school of the absence on the day? Are missing days reported back to parents to confirm their awareness?

- Is the child being sexually exploited during this day?
- Do the parents appear to be aware?
- Are the student's peers making comments or suggestions as to where the student is at?

Continuous missing days: Has the school been able to make contact with the parent/carer? Is medical evidence being provided? Are siblings attending school (either our or local schools)?

- Did we have any concerns about radicalisation, FGM, forced marriage, honour based violence, sexual exploitation?
- Have we had any concerns about physical or sexual abuse?

In the event of no improvement in attendance and no valid reason for non-attendance, parents will be informed that it may be necessary to contact the LEA since the school is not able to provide an education to a pupil on their roll.

If there is still no improvement then the LEA will be informed.

If the concern relates to Child Protection, then appropriate action will be taken (see Safeguarding policy).