



FAIRFORD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Isaiah 49:16 'I have written your name on the palms of my hands'.

Actively learning together in a safe, happy environment shaped by the certainty that each individual is loved and known by God.

Fairford C of E Primary School



Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy

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Approved by the Curriculum and Standards Committee September 2024. Next review September 2025

Approved by the Full Governing Board October 2024. Next review October 2025

(Information for Parents)

FAIRFORD C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

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FAIRFORD C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

School Vision:

Isaiah 49:16 'I have written your name on the palms of my hands.'

Actively Learning Together... in a safe, happy environment shaped by the certainty that each individual is loved and known by God.

At Fairford Primary School we have chosen those values that best reflect our thoughts as a school and community.

Perseverance
Friendship
Respect
Forgiveness
Trust
Thankfulness

1. Statement of Intent

1.1. At Fairford Church of England Primary School we believe that attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, the staff at Fairford Primary ,in conjunction with parents, carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships with pupils, parents and carers.

1.2 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education elsewhere.

1.3 Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence, in advance, from the school.

1.4 Fairford C of E Primary School believes that to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

1.5 We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

1.6. Our objective is to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

1.7 We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as our curriculum, behaviour standards, anti-bullying activities, SEND support, pastoral support, and effective use of resources including pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

1.8. We are committed to:

- promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits;
- ensuring equality and fairness for all;
- ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils, and parents;
- intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils;
- building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance;
- working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies;
- ensuring parents follow the framework set in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude, and to any special educational needs or disabilities they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise; and
- regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils, groups of pupils or cohorts that require more support.

2. Contacting the School About Absence

2.1 The Attendance Officers are the School Office Team. They can be contacted via absence@fairford.gloucs.sch.uk. Staff, parents and carers are expected to contact the Attendance Officers with queries or concerns about attendance. Absence requests and concerns regarding attendance will be passed on to the Headteacher.

2.2 Absences due to Illness

If your child is ill, you will need to let school know by one of the following methods by 08.30 on the first day of their illness.

- Updating the Portal online system
- Telephone (01285) 712543
- Email absence@fairford.gloucs.sch.uk

Please let us know why your child is absent. If your child has experienced sickness and / or diarrhoea they must remain off school for 48 hours.

2.3 Other Requests for absence

Should be completed via the link on the School Website or School Portal

3. Legal Framework

3.1 This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working together to improve school attendance* and *School attendance, parental responsibility measures*. This statutory guidance reflects the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties which 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

- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education(Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

This policy also refers to the guidance of the Department for Education (DfE) on the school census which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3.2 This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Positive Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Parents/carers are responsible for:

- providing accurate and up-to-date contact details;
- providing the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child ;
- updating the school if their details change;
- ensuring that their children attend school every day on time when school is open;
- promoting good attendance with their children;
- only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances;
- proactively engaging with support offered formally or informally to help their child overcome any barriers to school attendance;
- booking any medical appointments outside the school day where possible; and
- notifying the school in line with the school's missing education processes as soon as possible when their child is unexpectedly absent because of sickness.

4.2 Pupils are responsible for:

- attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school; and
- arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

4.3 The Governing Board has overall responsibility for:

- the overall strategic approach to attendance in school;
- monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school;
- recognising and promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies;
- ensuring attendance training is provided for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role;
- working with the Headteacher to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goal;
- regularly reviewing attendance data;
- ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation;
- ensuring complaints regarding this policy are handled as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy; and
- having regard to '*Keeping children safe in education*' when monitoring the school's procedures for to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

4.4 The Headteacher is responsible for:

- the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school;
- ensuring regular review of attendance data, weekly and half termly is completed and reported to governors;
- ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures;
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies;
- ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and acting as early as possible to address patterns of absence;
- supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils;
- ensuring that school's data is shared with the Local Authority;
- requesting the issue of fixed penalty notices, when necessary.

4.3 Staff members are responsible for:

- following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too;
- ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently;
- modelling good attendance behaviour;
- using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated; and
- accurate completion of the school's attendance registers using the correct codes and submitting them to the school office as soon as possible after the register is completed.

4. 4 The Attendance Officers are responsible for:

- developing a clear vision and strategy for improving attendance;
- monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions;

- analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement;
- providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Headteacher;
- communicating with pupils and parents about attendance;
- taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day to day basis and recording it on the school system;
- keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communications with parents and carers;
- working with other school staff such as the SENCO to follow up on incidents of persistent poor attendance;
- informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers; and
- ensuring that the attendance policy is on the school's website and is communicated clearly to parents.

5. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy.

Absence:

- arrival at school after the register has closed ;or
- not attending school for any reason.

Authorised absence:

- an absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave ;
- medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave;
- compulsory school age child subject to a part-time timetable;
- parents travelling for occupational purposes, see paragraph 13
- religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave ;and
- an absence due to a family emergency.

Unauthorised absence:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- arrival at school after the register has closed (****U code, see page 9****) ;
- absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed; and
- leaving school for no reason during the day.

Persistent absence (PA):

- missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

Severe absence (SA)

- missing 50 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

6. Attendance Expectations

6.1 The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents, carers and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

6.2 The school day starts at 08:30am, and pupils must be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by 8:25am. Pupils will be expected to return from breaks and lunch on time and be ready to recommence learning.

6.3 Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day and except in cases of Authorised Absence :

- pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by the time registers are taken;
- pupils will receive a mark of unauthorised absence (**U code, see page 9**) for the morning session if they do not attend school before 09:00am when registers will officially close;
- afternoon registers will be marked after lunch at 1pm and pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time; and
- the afternoon register will close at 1:15pm. Pupils will receive a mark of unauthorised absence if they are not present.

6.4 Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

7. Absence Procedures

7.1 Parents and carers are required to update the School Portal, contact the school office via telephone 01285 712543 or email absence@fairford.gloucs.sch.uk before 08:30am on the first day of their child's absence. They will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last; for example, one school day.

7.2 When a pupil is absent, and their parent or carer has not contacted the school by the **close of the morning register** at 9:00am to report the absence, the Office Team will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts the school will continue to attempt to reach these contacts and will also try any other means of contact available to the school; for example, contacting other known family members or neighbours.

7.3 The school will always follow up any unexplained absence absences in order to:

- ascertain the reason for the absence;

- ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken;
- identify whether the absence is authorised or not; and
- identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system which will be done no later than 5 working days after the first missed school session.

The school will call the parent/ carer on each day the absence continues without explanation and, if necessary will contact Social Care so as to ensure that if necessary safeguarding action is taken.

7.4 Where a pupil is absent for more than three school days in a row, or more than 10 school days in one term, the pupil's parent will be requested and expected to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the reasons for the absence(s).

7.5 The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate evidence, where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

If the school is not satisfied as to the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The parents/carers will be informed of this in advance.

7.6 In the case of Persistent Absence (PA) ** or where a child is at risk of becoming PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Headteacher. The school will inform the Local Authority (LA), on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

****Persistent Absence (PA) is where attendance has dropped below 90%****

7.7 When a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

7.8. Appendix A contains information about the school's procedures for monitoring absence.

8. Attendance Register

8.1 The school uses a system called **SIMS** to record attendance. This information can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate Local authorities.

8.2 Designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day** and **at the start of the afternoon session**. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational visit and the nature of that visit
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances and the nature of the circumstances

8.3 A pupil who arrives late:

- before the register has closed will be marked as late (Code L);
- after the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U).

8.4 The school will use the national attendance codes set out in regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following are the main codes which will be used

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school (other authorised absence)
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments for which leave has been authorised
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed (**** U code is classed as a half day unauthorised absence****)
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = mobile child ,parent travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with that parent
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y1-Y7 = Exceptional circumstances (partial and forced closure; for example ,severe weather)

When the school has planned to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years; for example, induction days.

8.5 Any amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

8.56 Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for six years.

9. Authorising Parental Absence Requests

9.1 There are occasions when exceptional leave will be requested. Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil’s education into account considering the pupils attendance record. The

Headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal. See Appendix B (Absence and Term Time Holidays Information), Appendix C (Absence Holiday Request Form) and Appendix D (Absence Request Non-Holiday).

9.2 The school will only grant a pupil leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. To have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the Headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

9.3 Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be considered. Where the absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school will not grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holidays except in the most exceptional circumstances

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- immediately before and during statutory assessment periods;
- when a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence; or
- where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason.

Please note this is not an exclusive or exhaustive list.

9.4 If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in a sanction, such as a Fixed Penalty Notice. See paragraph 19 (Legal intervention) for more information regarding the circumstances when absence from school may result in legal action being taken against parents.

9.5 The school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

10. Illness and Healthcare Appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

You can find a get an application form for medical or dental appointments from the school office or from our school website. This form is set out in Appendix D

11. Performances and Activities, Including Paid Work

11.1 The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to

obtain a licence from the LA which allows the child to perform or engage in the activity. Applications for this type of work will need to be made via this link

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/apply-for-a-child-performance-licence>.

Parents are requested to send a copy of the form to the school for our records.

11.2 Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that they are suitable for the pupil.

11.3 The Headteacher's permission must be requested for any such absence at least two weeks in advance. Where there are concerns that the absence may cause education to suffer, the school will liaise with the Local Authority

12. Religious Observance

12.1 Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** in advance.

12.2 The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

12.3 The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

13. Parent travelling for occupational purposes

When the child is a mobile child and their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the child is travelling with them, then the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes. A mobile child is one who is of compulsory school age who has no fixed place of abode and whose parent is engaged in a business of such a nature as requires them to travel from place to place (Code T).

14. SEND – and Health Related Absences

14.1 The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

14.2 In line with the schools SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

14.3 Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's

lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

14.4 If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days;
- provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities, and programme of work;
- help the pupil reintegrate into school when they return;
- make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs; and
- encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

14.5 The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there have been signs of significant improvement.

14.6 To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments;
- incorporating a pastoral support plan;
- carrying out a strengths and difficulties questionnaire;
- identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework (a National standardised approach for the assessment of children and their families, to facilitate the early identification of additional needs and to promote a coordinated service response);
- using an internal or external specialist;
- enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable;
- ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and break times;
- implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out;
- temporary late starts or early finishes;
- phased returns to school where there has been a long absence;
- small group work or one-to-one lessons; and
- tailored support to meet their individual needs.

15. Leave During Lunch Times

15.1 Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the Headteacher. It is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

15.2 Parents must submit a written request, outlining the reasons for wishing their child to leave the premises during lunch time. This request will be submitted to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as regarding

the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The Headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within **one week** of the request.

15.3 Where permission has been granted, the Headteacher will ensure a lunchtime pass is printed for the pupil and will include the pupil's name on the off-site register.

15.4 Pupils will leave the school premises within **10 minutes** of the start of lunch and will return no later than **5 minutes** before the end of lunch.

15.5 Parents will be required to meet their child **at the school office** when taking them off the premises. The pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register **at the school office**. A member of staff will be available **at the school office** before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff **at the school office** has given their permission.

15.6 The Headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time. This may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be communicated in writing, explaining the reasons for the Headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time. The request should be submitted in writing to the Headteacher.

15.7 Lunch time leave permission will be updated on a **termly** basis. Letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

16. Attendance Intervention

16.1 In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Headteacher will:

- establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance;
- monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work;
- attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures; and
- establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - sending letters to parents;
 - having a weekly review with the Class Teacher;
 - engaging with LA attendance teams;
 - using fixed penalty notices; and
 - creating attendance clinics.

16.2 The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring, reporting and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

17. Working With Parents to Improve Attendance

17.1 The School will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance, and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance; for example, social services and health professionals.

17.2 The school will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation. Parents can check this and add additional contact details via the **School Portal** and it is recommended by the School that parents undertake to check their information and that of their children on the **School Portal** and either update or amend any missing or incorrect information themselves or notify the **School Office**.

17.3 The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education. Parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances such as sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence, and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially, and developmentally. In this school this is done through parents' evenings, end of year reports and, if necessary, letters outlining lower than expected attendance and the support available to improve this.

17.4 If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Headteacher will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

17.5 Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school; for example, bullying, the Headteacher will work with the relevant school staff, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) to address these issues. Where the barriers are outside the school's control and are, for example, related to issues within the pupil's family, the Headteacher will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, such as children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

18. **Persistent Absence (PA) – Attendance below 90%**

18.1 There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and Persistent Absenteeism, such as:

- Children in need – requiring additional support from the Local Authority
- Looked After Children
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
- Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND)

- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

18.2 The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of Persistent Absences (PA) to attend school. These include:

- offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps;
- meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having;
- establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support;
- leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support;
- making regular contact with families to discuss progress;
- assessing whether an EHC plan may be appropriate;
- considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have high rates of absence and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing, trying different strategies if those first tried are not successful.

18.3 Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities such as social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of Severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

19. Legal Intervention

19.1 The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after a **6 week period**, the Headteacher will consider:

- holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the Education Inclusion Service;
- working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place; and
- engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

19.2 Where voluntary support options have failed or are not appropriate (for example in the case of unauthorised holidays in term time) the school will work with the LA to take forward legal intervention. This course of action is always a last resort.

9.4.2 The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council to issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold described in paragraph 9.4.3 has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct available on the Gloucestershire County website.

9.4.3 If a pupil has over 10 sessions (5 days) of Unauthorised Absence and /or of being late after the register has closed in a 10 week period each adult with parental responsibility may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice of £80 per child from the Local Authority.

The Penalty Notice allows you 21 days to pay a £80 fine. If you pay after the 21-day period, but within 28 days, the fine to pay is £160. If the fine remains unpaid at this stage, the LA will usually initiate legal proceedings against you. There is no right of appeal in court by parents against a Fixed Penalty Notice.

9.4.4 The national framework for penalty notices sets out a maximum of two penalty notices per child per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. The second notice is payable at £160 per child with no option to reduce the fine by paying earlier. If the national threshold is met for a third time the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates courts under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

For these purposes under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 'parent' means:

- all natural parents, whether married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil; and
- any person who has care of a child or pupil; that is, lives with and looks after a child.

20. Monitoring, Reporting and Analysing Absence

20.1 The Headteacher is responsible for attendance and will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

20.2 Appendix A to this policy sets out the school's attendance monitoring procedures.

20.3 The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- the school cohort as a whole;
- individual year group;
- individual pupils;
- demographic groups; for example, pupils from different ethnic groups or economic background;.
- other groups of pupils; for example, pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND), Looked After Children (LAC), and pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM);and
- pupils at risk of Persistent Absence (PA).

20.4 The Headteacher is responsible for attendance and will review the school's data weekly to check for emerging issues. On a half termly basis the Headteacher will undertake a thorough analysis of the above data to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- patterns in uses of certain codes;
- particular days of poor attendance;
- historic trends of attendance and absence; and
- barriers to attendance.

20.5. The Headteacher will report to each meeting of the full Governing Board and of the Curriculum and Standards Committee on the most recent analysis of attendance and action taken to improve attendance.

20.6 The Headteacher will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The Headteacher will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future. The Headteacher will ensure that this is then shared with the Governing Board and the Local Authority

20.6The school will also benchmark its attendance data against, local regional and national level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

20.6 The Headteacher will inform parents and carers of their child's attendance level in accordance with the procedures set out in Appendix A if the school has any concerns. Otherwise parents and carers will receive information after each term as to their child's attendance during that term.

20.7 Details of whole school attendance data will be published on the school website each week.

21. Training of Staff

21.1 The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. Therefore staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

21.2 The Headteacher will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

21.3 Training will cover at least the following:

- the importance of good attendance;
- recognition that absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances;
- the legal requirements on schools, such as the keeping of registers;
- the school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance; and
- the school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it.

21.4 Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

22. Monitoring and Review

22.1 Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **96.5%** Full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the [school website](#).

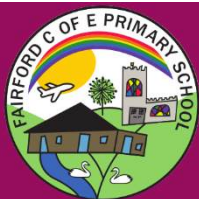
22.2 This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Headteacher and the Governors and more often if any changes to Local Authority or DfE guidance so require. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2025**. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Appendices

A: Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Fairford C of E Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard.

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the SLT and Headteacher detailing **weekly** and **annual** attendance to date for each child.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil whose absence has not been reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and Headteacher daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not replaced with a reason for the absence after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls to **95 percent**, the Headteacher speaks to the parent to discuss any issues or problems and to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance.
6. The Headteacher tracks the pupils' attendance carefully following this discussion. If the attendance improves the Headteacher phones home to thank the parent for working with the school to address this.
7. If a pupil's attendance falls below **95 percent**, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
8. If a pupil's attendance continues to fall and drops below **90 percent**, a second letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being formally monitored, and the Headteacher contacts the parents to discuss this.
9. The pupil's attendance is monitored for **six weeks** and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, the school may contact Gloucestershire's Education Inclusion Service, who will discuss next steps. If parents cannot attend a meeting in school, the Headteacher will seek to resolve this through use of other mechanisms such as a Teams meeting or finding a time outside of the school core hours.
10. After the **six week** monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to **95 percent**.
11. If targets are not met, the Headteacher makes a referral to the LA Education Inclusion Service and a decision is made as to the next steps that will be taken to safeguard the pupil. In line with the DFE guidance this could include a Parenting Contract, an Education Supervision Order or prosecution. Prosecution is the last resort but can result in a fine of up to £1,000. The decision to prosecute remains solely with the LA as an independent prosecuting authority. If the pupil has an allocated social worker or is a looked-after child, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.



FAIRFORD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Isaiah 49:16 'I have written your name on the palms of my hands'.

Actively learning together in a safe, happy environment shaped by the certainty that each individual is loved and known by God.

Absence and Term Time Holidays

Information for parents and carers about taking their children out of school during term time.

Introduction

By law, parents and carers of children registered at school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they fail to do this, they are guilty of an offence and may be given a penalty notice or prosecuted under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Children should attend school every day so that they make the most of the education available to them. We understand that there may be occasions when a child is unwell and is not able to come in to school, but this should be kept to a minimum.

Parents and carers must avoid taking their children out of school during term time. In accordance with Department for education statutory guidance, the Governing Body have instructed that authorisation for absence will not be given for holidays during term time. Holidays should be taken during the school breaks and not during term time. However, in exceptional circumstances, permission may be given by the Headteacher.

The Law

Amendments to the 2006 Education Act make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

It is clear that parents and carers do not have any right to take a child out of school during term time except in exceptional circumstances. In most cases Mrs Fellows will refuse to authorise term time leave, however, each case will be considered on its individual merits.

How we deal with requests for term-time absence

Fairford CE School has a very strict policy about term time holidays. Our policy is to refuse all applications for holidays during term time. As a school, we are no longer prepared to accept that our children will miss out on their education because of absence during term time. Children are at school for 190 days in the year. That leaves 175 days for holidays and other trips.

How to apply for special leave during term time

Please ask one of the office staff for an Absence Form. This must be done at least 2 weeks in advance of the date of the proposed leave. You should expect to hear from us within 5 working

days. Term time holidays will **NOT BE AUTHORISED** unless there are exceptional circumstances which might justify it. Each case will be considered on its individual merits.

What are exceptional circumstances?

It is the decision of the Headteacher as to what might constitute exceptional circumstances and each request for term time leave will be considered on an individual basis.

Exceptional leave is NOT:

- availability of cheap flights and/or holidays;
- availability of desired accommodation;
- parent / carer work commitments;
- poor weather experienced during school holiday periods; or
- overlap with the beginning or end of term or half term.

Exceptional leave MAY be:

- grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill – and you must leave in an emergency;
- significant trauma in the family recently and a holiday will benefit the child – this must be backed up by a doctor's letter;
- a one-off, never to be repeated occasion that can only happen at that time such as a direct family member wedding / funeral.

What if we decide to go anyway?

If the Headteacher has not authorised the leave, and your child is out of school then you risk receipt of a fine of **£160 per child (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days of the first offence. If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three year period the fine is £160 with no option to pay a reduced rate.** The fine is payable by each parent for each child.

If the time out of school makes your child's attendance drops below 90%, then they are known as 'persistently absent'. For this, the Government have given schools new powers to deal with this through the courts. This means facing possible prosecution.

Please don't take your child out of school during term time. It disrupts your child's learning and you risk financial penalties.

If we authorise your special leave

If we do authorise a special leave of absence under exceptional circumstances, you must understand the educational impact upon your child. We will also explain what work your child will miss at school, and agree with you how this may be addressed, either during the holiday or upon your return. Taking work with you on special leave is no substitute for classroom teaching.

If we do authorise your leave, you will receive a signed Absence Form which confirms the dates when your child will be absent and the agreed date for return. It can only be signed by the Headteacher. A copy will be kept in the file in the office for our records.

Appendix C



FAIRFORD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Request for holiday leave of absence during term time (in exceptional circumstances)

Parents should be aware that the law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. The Department for Education allows a Headteacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time only in “exceptional circumstances”.

You may consider that a holiday will be educational but your child will still miss out on the teaching and learning that their peers will receive whilst your child is away. Children returning from a leave of absence during term time are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed and arrangements need to be made for individual children to catch up on missed work. Disruption to the continuity of teaching and learning is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

If you wish to request a leave of absence you will need to complete the form on the reverse of this notice, setting out the reasons. If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance it will not be agreed. If you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence this **will be recorded as unauthorised leave**.

In the case of an unauthorised leave of absence the headteacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice without further warning to the parent. Please note that such a penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £80 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £160 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Thereafter, if the penalty remains unpaid this may lead to prosecution through the Magistrates’ Court.

All leave of absence requests should be completed on the attached form by the parent with whom the child ordinarily resides. This should be returned to the school at least two weeks before the start of the holiday. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

I hope you will support our efforts to maintain good levels of attendance and attainment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stellens', is written over a horizontal line.

Head Teacher

Request for holiday leave of absence during term time (In exceptional circumstances)

Name of child(ren)		
Year group(s) and Class(es)	Year Group	Class Name
Date of first day of absence		
Date of return to school		
Total Number of school days absent		

Please ensure that you are giving at least 2 weeks’ notice of the proposed absence. Retrospective applications cannot be authorised

If a pupil fails to return within ten school days following the anticipated date of return and no reason is provided, there may be grounds (under some circumstances) to delete your child’s name from the Admissions Register and register them as a Child Missing Education.

Please detail the exceptional circumstances (reasons) for which you are requesting leave of absence

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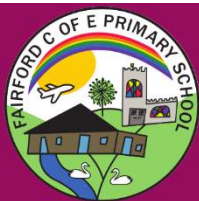
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Please tick to confirm that you have read and understood the following:

I understand that if the absence request is not authorised and the holiday is taken the Head Teacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £80 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £160 if paid between 21 and 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay this it may result in legal action.

APPENDIX D



FAIRFORD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Request for Leave to take a child out of school for medical appointment or any other circumstance except for holiday

Child's Name _____ Class _____

Date of absence from school _____

Reason for absence _____

Signed _____ (parent/guardian) Date _____

Please ask one of the office staff for an Absence Form. Where possible, this must be done at least 2 weeks in advance of the date of the proposed leave. You should expect to hear from us within 5 working days.

The School's Attendance and Absence Policy can be found [here](https://fairford.gloucs.sch.uk/policies/) on our School Website <https://fairford.gloucs.sch.uk/policies/>