



## THE FLYING START FEDERATION

### Attendance Policy

Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school.

#### Mission Statement

In striving to enable each child to reach their full potential, The Flying Start Federation aims to maximise attendance and punctuality by working with children and their parents.

#### Rights and Responsibilities

##### *Federation:*

- Federation expects pupils to attend school regularly and to arrive in a fit condition to learn
- Federation will encourage good attendance and will investigate all absenteeism.
- Federation staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.
- Federation will work closely with parents should attendance / punctuality give cause for concern.

The class teacher has a vital role to play in maintaining this high profile and, in order to ensure the school's effectiveness, should bear the following points in mind and implement the school policy.

Children who enjoy school are far less likely to incur unnecessary absences than those who feel unsure or intimidated. It is, therefore, essential that staff actively seek to promote the *caring ethos of the school* and that children on their entry to school are greeted cheerfully and with a personal word of welcome. Class teachers need to be alert to the child who comes into school looking fraught or under the weather and to take appropriate action quickly. An awareness of children who experience difficulty in relating to and being accepted by others is most important as is vigilance with regard to early signs of bullying.

##### *Pupils:*

- Pupils will ensure that they attend regularly and on time.
- Pupils will be listened to and respected.
- Pupils will have individual records of attendance / punctuality acknowledged by the school.

##### *Parents:*

- Parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly, punctually and are properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn.



- Parents are responsible for informing the school at once of the reason for any absence (by letter, phone call or personal visit).
- Parents are required to complete a Request for Authorised Absence to notify the school of planned absence from school. *Authorisation of planned absence from school will only take place in exceptional circumstances (see below).*
- Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's progress.

### **Absence**

All absences must be explained by parental note / message. The school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence. All messages received by the Head Teacher, admin staff or any other member of staff will be conveyed to the appropriate class teacher. If no information from home is forthcoming, teachers will inform the school office who will contact the child's parents. Teachers should pay particular attention to the possibility of unauthorised absence and take speedy action if this is suspected.

Absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement

### **Absence from school will not be authorised for:**

- Shopping
- Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents<sup>1</sup>
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Holidays

The law says that parents DO NOT have the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. However, in exceptional circumstances school may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave.

- School will look at the number of absences in the previous academic year, looking particularly at any previous requests for absences during term time. If a child's attendance fell below 95% last year, it is less likely that authorisation would be granted.
- The school will not authorise any requests for absence in the first three weeks of the school year and for any time in May before the SATs (this is assessment time when it is important that all children are in school).



- School will also take into account the child's age, stage of education and educational progress when making a decision.
- School may ask for confirmation or proof that the suggested time of leave is the **only** time that can be taken by the family due to, for example, work commitments.
- It is not the school's decision to fine parents for unauthorised absences, but the decision of Devon's Educational Social Welfare Service.
- The evaluation grid (Appendix D) will be completed to help evaluate a request for absence.

### Fines for unauthorised absence

It is now Devon County Council policy to issue Penalty Notices or fines for unauthorised absence when attendance falls below 95%. Details of the implementation of fines can be found in Devon County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, of which the following is an extract: *"Following the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 it is possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices will require the parent of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay a fine, per parent per child currently £60.00 if paid within 28 days or £120.00 if paid within 42 days."*

These Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised holidays within term time and unauthorised absence from school when the circumstances appear to have been avoidable, (e.g. child too tired after a late night, a birthday treat, family friends/relatives visiting). For more information visit

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/school-attendance/absence-from-school-penalty-notices>

### Appointments

Children's appointments, where possible, should be made after 3.30pm. If this is not possible, information will be required in relation to:

- Who the appointment is with (e.g. the doctor, the dentist, the optician, the hospital)
- The length of time out of school required
- The expected time of return
- Whether or not the child will require a school meal that day
- Appointment cards where possible should be shown at school.

If parents need to collect their child from school, it is important that school has been informed beforehand. Children will not be allowed to leave school during the school day if they are unaccompanied. The parent or authorised adult should collect their child from the child's classroom and it is the responsibility of the teacher to complete the sign-out book.



## Registration (Including Lateness)

*Morning registration period between 8.55am and 9.10 am*

*Afternoon registration period is between 1:15pm and 1:30 pm*

Morning registration will take place at 9.00am and the register should be filled in very carefully. Children who have a regular job at this time should report to the class teacher before embarking upon their tasks, otherwise children should not be asked to do jobs at this time unless this is within their own classroom. Children should not be given an absent mark before 9.00am. All children must be given a mark of some kind before the register is completed. Please see Appendix A for marking the register.

## Procedures for following up Absence/Lateness

1. **Teachers, having the daily contact with the children and registers, make note of** absences on the register and follow up absence where there is no message from the parent or carer, immediately after registers close at 9.10 am paying particular attention to those children who come into school by bus or taxi. Calls to parents concerning absence of these children should be made first.
2. All unexplained absences are followed up by contact verbally with the parents / carers to establish reasons for absence. This is done as daily.
3. If an explanation for the absence is not forthcoming (i.e. by telephone), a letter (Appendix C) will be sent by post to the parent / carer. The letter will request that the parent /carer to come into school to discuss their child's absence. If staff are concerned as to the whereabouts of a child then a call to the Education Welfare Office will be made, or to MASH if serious safeguarding concerns are held.
4. If a child's attendance falls below 95% but above 90%, a fortnightly teacher-headteacher-administrator discussion should occur, with reference to the register. An initial letter informing the parent / carer that attendance has fallen below 95% will be sent home. If no improvement is seen within four weeks a further letter is sent inviting parents/carers to a meeting to discuss patterns of absence and to offer support to improve attendance. Where absence is attributed to illness, evidence of medical intervention may be asked for.
5. If attendance continues to cause concern or there are recurring concerns the matter will be discussed with the Headteacher and possibly referred to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).
6. Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% will be referred to the EWO.
7. Where there is a concern that a child may be truanting, contact will be made with the parents / carers immediately.

## Strategies for promoting attendance / punctuality

- Parents, pupils and staff are to be made aware of the importance of good attendance including distribution of information where appropriate.



- The school will award certificates through its usual praise [behaviour] policy to pupils whose attendance / punctuality is much improved.
- Parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 95% will be invited into school by the Headteacher to discuss strategies to improve their child's attendance if no improvement after letter informing parent.
- Structured meetings will be held at appropriate times with the school's Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils whose attendance / punctuality is a source of concern.
- Pupils are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance.
- Termly reports will be made by the Headteacher to the school's governing body on the issue of attendance / punctuality.

### Equal Opportunities

We aim to offer an education and working environment appropriate to each individual pupil's needs regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability or religious beliefs.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Chair of Resources

<b>Date approved:</b>	<b>06.10.2015</b>
<b>Approving committee:</b>	<b>Resources Committee</b>
<b>Date revised:</b>	
<b>Version:</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Date for Review</b>	<b>January 2017</b>

### Version History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date Issued</b>	<b>Brief Summary of Change</b>	<b>Owner's Name</b>
0.1	26.02.2014	Policy Adopted	Gina Finch
1.1	25.03.2015	Policy Reviewed	Wendy Ainscough
2.1	06.10.2015	Policy Reviewed	Gina Finch



## APPENDIX A: Marking the Register

The marking of registers can sometimes become so routine that its importance is lost. However, incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. They also contribute to pupils' end of term reports. For these reasons registers are done directly onto online Sims Register which is accessible through teacher PCs.

The coding for the marking of the register is accessed by right clicking over the attendance box.

Beside each child's record for the week is a space for notes relating to absence. This should be filled in with why the child was absent, e.g. parent phoned, letter received about doctors appointment, holiday authorised.

If an absence is unexplained, the absences will followed up, in the first instance by the teacher, but later by the school administrator or headteacher



## **APPENDIX B: Attendance Targets**

This target has been set after liaison with the Educational Social Worker and is shared with the Governing Body at the beginning of each academic year.



APPENDIX C ABSENCE LETTERS STANDARD WORDING

The Flying Start Federation  
EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER: MRS GINA FINCH

Re : School Attendance

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

I am writing to inform you that .... attendance has dropped below 90%.

A copy of ..... registration certificate is enclosed for your attention. The certificate shows attendance is currently ..%.

I appreciate that occasional absence due to illness is unavoidable. However, it is important that .... attendance improves to ensure that **he/she** receives the best education possible whilst at Parkham/Buckland Brewer Primary school.

If there are any issues that you wish to discuss or there are any ways in which we can help to improve attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Gina Finch

Executive Head Teacher



The Flying Start Federation  
Executive Headteacher: Mrs Gina Finch

**Re : Absence Enquiry**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent

Your child \_\_\_\_\_

was absent from school on:

\_\_\_\_\_

I would be grateful if you would let me know the reason for the absence by replying on this form and returning it to me as soon as possible. If there is an ongoing reason for the absence that the school should be aware of or if this absence is likely to continue, please speak to me or your child's teacher in confidence. If a satisfactory reason for your child's absence cannot be given, the school will be obliged to record the absence as unauthorised.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that parents are requested to contact the school on the first day of any absence before 9.30 am if possible.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Gina Finch

Executive Head Teacher



The Flying Start Federation  
Executive Headteacher: Mrs Gina Finch

**Re :** School Attendance (2)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dear** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

Since we wrote to you on <INSERT DATE OF 1<sup>ST</sup> LETTER>, «chosen\_forename»'s attendance has failed to improve significantly, and is below what we would expect.

A copy of «chosen\_forename»'s registration certificate showing a breakdown of days absent and their overall attendance percentage of «percentage\_attendance» is enclosed for your attention.

Ongoing low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success, therefore it is important that low attendance is dealt with as early as possible. We wish to help «chosen\_forename» to improve «his\_her» attendance and would appreciate your support to make sure attendance improves.

Therefore, I would be grateful if you could please contact me within the next seven days to arrange a meeting to discuss and set out a plan for improvement of «chosen\_forename»'s attendance to ensure that «he\_she» receives the best education possible whilst at \*\*\*\*\* Primary School.

Please note a failure to contact the school within the timescale stated above may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Office.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Gina Finch

Executive Headteacher



**Appendix D**

Absence request evaluation:

Name of child.....

Date of absence request.....

Attendance over last academic year is above 95%?.....

Attendance this year to date is above 95%?.....

Absence requested is unavoidable?.....

Have other absence requests been made within the last 6 months.....

last year?.....

Has parent given convincing evidence that absence is necessary? .....

Absence requested during first three weeks of term or during assessment periods?

Outcome of request- Authorised or Unauthorised?