

# The Firs Lower School

## Attendance Policy

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## 1- Statement of intent

The Firs Lower believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Pupils with poor attendance tend to achieve less throughout their education.

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.

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

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all
- Ensuring our 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 SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise*
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support

The school's attendance lead is Mrs S A'Court, and can be contacted via [sue.acourt@firslower.org](mailto:sue.acourt@firslower.org). Parents / carers will be expected to contact [office@firslower.org](mailto:office@firslower.org) for queries or to obtain a Leave of Absence (LOA) form. The name of our linked Governor for attendance is Mr Amaritpal Uppal.

## 2- Working Together to Improve Attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

### EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



## MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible, so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



## LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



## FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



## FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



## ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

### 3 - Legal framework

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Summary Table of responsibilities for school attendance ([Appendix B](#))
- Children Missing Education - CBC Policy
- Attendance Officer Home Visit Policy

#### **4- Roles and responsibilities**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance lead role
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels

The attendance lead is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school
- Working with the headteacher to develop a clear vision for improving attendance
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

Staff 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
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school
- (In age appropriate ways) making appropriate efforts to be ready to learn punctually at the beginning of lessons when in school.
- Follow any attendance/registration procedures particular to trips and out of school activities

Parents are responsible for:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:05 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Sue A'Court, who can be contacted on 01525 402735 or at [sue.acourt@firslower.org](mailto:sue.acourt@firslower.org)
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details
- Updating the school if their details change

## 5- Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- 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
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency
- Any other exceptional authorised absence

Unauthorised absence:

- No absence below 90% will be authorised unless in extenuating circumstances such as long term illness
- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without approved acceptable reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- 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
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

## 6- Attendance register

The school uses **RM Integris** (School Information Management System) to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at **8:55 a.m** and **1:20 p.m**. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational visit
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used

All 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.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **three years**.

## 7 - Attendance expectations

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

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

The school day starts at **8:55 a.m.** and pupils will need to be in their classroom, ready to begin registration at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be arriving on the school site by **8:45 a.m.** and the gate will be locked at **8:55**. Pupils attending Kids' Club can do so from **7:50 a.m.** Lunch break is **12:00 - 1:20 (KS1)** and **12:15 - 1:20 (KS2)**. The afternoon session begins at **1:20 p.m.**, which will last until **3:30 p.m.**

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **9:05 a.m.** Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The morning register will close at **9:20 a.m.** Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- The afternoon register will be marked by **1:30 p.m.** Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at **1:45 p.m.** Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

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

## **8- Absence procedures**

### Unplanned Absence:

Parents will be required to contact the school office via [Studybugs](#) before **9:05 a.m.** 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, e.g. one school day. Please report on Studybugs each subsequent day your child is unable to attend school.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not reported and explained their child's absence by **9:15 a.m.** we will contact the parent by **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 will be notified of this in advance.

The school will always follow up any unexplained 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
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system

The school will inform the LA, using the mandatory absence alert e-form [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/mandatory-absence-alert](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/mandatory-absence-alert), of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed ten school days or more without authorisation when either threshold is met.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty 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. This cannot be backdated to the date of the last attendance

#### Planned absence related to medical appointments:

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent **notifies the school in advance** of the appointment, giving the details. This can be done by contacting the school office on 01525 402735 or [office@firslower.org](mailto:office@firslower.org).

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

### **9- Approval for term-time absence**

In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to **complete the leave of absence form, at least two weeks in advance of the proposed date** and either hand it in to the office or email it to [office@firslower.org](mailto:office@firslower.org). The form must provide the reason and dates during which the absence would be expected to occur. The LOA form can be found on the school website by following this link: [Attendance and Leave of Absence](#) page.

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance
- Attending an interview
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as events that are beyond anyone's control and/or for which there was no opportunity to prepare in advance. Specifically, we see 'exceptional' events as ones that are a 'one off' and extremely significant for a child. We would expect them to be events that could not reasonably be arranged at a different time, outside of school hours. Examples of 'exceptional circumstances' could include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care for a looked after child or a housing crisis.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

## **10- Sanctions**

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### Penalty notices:

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

#### Notices to improve:

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## **11- Working with parents to improve attendance**

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, e.g., social services.

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, e.g., sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher or designated member of SLT 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. We will promote the benefits of high attendance in assemblies, newsletters, on our website and via social media. We will use systems such as the class Attendance Trophy to regularly flag up the importance of good attendance to children.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance lead 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.

## **12- Pupils absent due to Complex Barriers to attendance**

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

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND (see next section)
- Pupils with mental health issues and/or who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g., bullying, the issue will be thoroughly investigated by any relevant school staff, e.g., a member of The Safeguarding Team, working with other staff, such as the class teacher, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the school will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

The school will use a number of methods to help support vulnerable pupils to attend school. These may include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Meeting with children and parents/carers to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having
- Working with parents and other professionals to identify unmet needs (through the Common Assessment Framework where appropriate).

- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support e.g. a quiet space to be at social times, strategies to leave the classroom if needed, temporary changes to the timings and/or arrangements for coming into school etc.
- Small group or 1to1 pastoral support
- Leading regular check-ins to review progress and the impact of support
- Making regular informal contact with families to discuss progress
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or Early Help referral 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 rates of absence under 90% 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.

Where a pupil at risk of PA/SA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g., 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 PA/SA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **13- SEND- and health-related absences**

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 we will work with parents and relevant agencies sensitively, to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled / vulnerable 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.

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 DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health and given appropriate pastoral support.

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 at school when they return
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence

The school will create a support 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 has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider all the strategies set out on page 14.

#### **14- Monitoring and analysing attendance**

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

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

- The school cohort as a whole
- Individual year groups
- Individual pupils
- Demographic groups, e.g., pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds
- Other groups of pupils, e.g., pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM
- Pupils at risk of PA

The attendance lead / headteacher will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a **termly and full-year** basis 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
- Barriers to attendance

The attendance lead will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance lead will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

Attendance data will be submitted to Governors termly. The Attendance Link Governor will meet regularly to review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

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

#### **15- Training of staff**

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

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover the following:

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

The governing board will be responsible for ensuring there is dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance lead and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

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.

## **16- Policy Review**

The school's attendance target is **96 percent** – full details of the school's attendance policy can be found on the school website by following this link to the [Policies](#) Page.

This policy will be reviewed **bi-annually** by the headteacher.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

## Attendance Monitoring Procedures - Appendix A

The Firs Lower 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 created by the attendance Lead and sent to the SLT at the end of each term, detailing **termly** and **annual** attendance to date.
2. Attendance is discussed with class teachers and any attendance concerns and issues.
3. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by any staff are passed to the school attendance Lead and vice versa.
4. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not 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 Headteacher or a member of the SLT by the attendance officer daily.
5. Contact is made with the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established **after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence**.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls **and is a concern**, the Attendance Lead discusses this with the class teacher. A decision will be made which may involve:
  - The Attendance Lead contacting parents / carers either face to face or by phone to discuss the issue.
  - Speaking to the child in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance.
7. All attendance concerns are responded to on an individual basis but, as a guide, If a pupil's attendance falls below **95 percent**,\* **Trigger letter 1** is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. (\*Where a child's previous attainment has been good and a professional judgement is made that the attendance dip is due to an explained situation/ illness it may be decided not to send letter 1).
8. If a pupil's attendance does not improve (2-3 weeks) or falls below **90 percent**, **Trigger letter 2** is sent home, explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance lead contacts the parents to discuss this. (Proof of medical appointments needed).
9. The pupil's attendance is monitored for an agreed period of time (2-3 weeks) and, if attendance does not improve after this time, **Trigger Letter 3** is sent and parents are invited to attend a meeting in school (Supported by the School Attendance Officer where appropriate) where any support for the child/family can be discussed and targets set for improved attendance. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or genuinely unable

to attend, a referral may be required to the Local Authority School Attendance Officer (this will be discussed with them prior to accepting a referral.)

10. Monitoring and communication with the family will continue until attendance stabilises – if targets are not met, the attendance lead, in consultation with the headteacher, will discuss making a referral to their Local Authority School Attendance Officer.

## Appendix B - Trigger Letter 1

Attendance below 96%.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

### School Attendance - Trigger Point 1

The Firs Lower School is committed to maximising attendance for all pupils, to enable them to benefit fully from their education. Children who attend regularly generally achieve better outcomes at school and consequently in their futures.

I am writing to alert you to the fact that \_\_\_\_\_ attendance has now fallen to \_\_\_\_%. I have attached \_\_\_\_\_ attendance record to date for your information.

It would obviously be preferable for children to have 100% attendance. We realise that children have periods of illness that can recur and the school is very happy to work with you to try and support ..... improved attendance in any way possible in the future so that it improves to at least our minimum school target or 96%. We will be monitoring \_\_\_\_\_ attendance in the meantime.

If you have any concerns that you feel may have an impact on your child's attendance, or if we can support you in any way to help improve \_\_\_\_\_ attendance rate please do not hesitate to contact me or your child's class teacher.

Please contact us if you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Head Teacher

## Appendix C - Trigger Letter 2

Attendance below 90%.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

### School Attendance - Trigger Point 2

I am writing to advise you that at The Firs Lower School we promote and encourage good attendance as it is a major contributor to good attainment. Children who attend regularly generally achieve better outcomes at school and consequently in their futures.

Unfortunately your son/daughter's attendance has now fallen to \_%. His/her attendance record is attached for your reference.

In accordance with Local Authority guidelines, we are now required to ask you to provide us with medical evidence for all future medical/illness absences, including appointments. (Prescribed medicines, copies of prescriptions, documented evidence that \_\_\_\_\_ is advised not to attend school, hospital letters and appointment cards only). Unfortunately while \_\_\_\_\_ attendance is below 90%, we will not be able to authorise any further absences unless there are extenuating circumstances such as long term illness.

Of course it would be preferable for children to have 100% attendance. We realise this may not be possible for all children but would appreciate your support in ensuring that your son/daughter's attendance improves to at least our minimum school target of 96%. We will be monitoring his/her attendance in the meantime.

If you have any concerns that you feel may have an impact on your child's attendance, or if we can support you in any way to help to improve \_\_\_\_\_ attendance rate please do not hesitate to contact me or your child's class teacher.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Head Teacher

## Appendix D - Trigger Point 3 Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

### School Attendance - Trigger Point 3

I am writing to you concerning the continuing problem of your child's irregular attendance at school. \_\_\_\_\_ current attendance is only \_\_%.

We have endeavoured to seek your support with this matter, but unfortunately your child's irregular attendance has now reached a stage where the school or Local Authority may consider taking legal action against you for failing to carry out your statutory responsibility of ensuring that your child receives an efficient full-time education at school. The action may include prosecuting you in a Magistrates court.

To avoid this possibility, I would therefore like to invite you to a meeting with me and the Local Authority School Attendance Improvement Officer to find ways of improving your child's attendance and so avoid the need for further action. This meeting has been arranged for \_\_\_\_\_.

If this date or time is inconvenient, please contact me at your earliest convenience so that a suitable time can be arranged.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Head Teacher

## Appendix E. - Invitation to Review Meeting

### Attendance Review Meeting

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

As you are aware, we continue to work hard to improve our pupil's attendance levels, thus improving the life chances of your child and enabling them to achieve their full potential.

In accordance with the school's Attendance Policy we are arranging meetings with the Class Teacher and Head Teacher for all those pupils who have had attendance that is a cause for concern (at the end of the previous academic year) and who would be at risk of becoming a persistent absentee.

The aim of this meeting is to discuss the reasons for the absences and offer advice and support to enable your child to achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for the new academic year.

The meeting will be held:

On:

At:

It is very important that you attend this meeting; however if you are unable to make the above time or date please inform the school as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements.

Thank you for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Head Teacher

## Appendix F - Attendance Contract

### Pupil/Parent Attendance Contract

School attendance is vital if a pupil is to realise his or her full potential. This contract is designed to formalise support and provide an action plan to address school attendance problems.

Forename	Surname	Date of Birth	Class
Attendance in previous academic year	Unauthorised	Current Attendance	
Reasons for previous poor attendance/Issues raised			
Agreed Actions/Targets			
1)			
2)			
3)			
Signed (Parent) _____		Date _____	
Signed (Pupil) _____		Date _____	
Signed (Teacher) _____		Date _____	
Review Date (4 weeks from initial date) _____			

## Appendix G. Letter regarding lateness

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

As you may be aware, the school is working very hard to improve both attendance and punctuality. \_\_\_\_\_ has been identified as having been late on \_\_\_\_\_ occasions since \_\_\_\_\_(date).

It is understandable and acceptable that any child can be late on an odd occasion for any number of reasons, all of which should be verified by the parent/carer. However, I am sure you will agree that excessive lateness is unacceptable.

Lateness in school causes immense disruption and inconvenience, plus actively disadvantages the progress of pupils whose lessons are constantly interrupted by the arrival of latecomers. It is also often very embarrassing for the pupil to be constantly arriving late.

I must advise you to make certain that your child resumes a punctual attendance pattern as soon as possible. Registration is at 08.55. If a child arrives at school after the registers have closed, without an adequate reason, we have to record this as an unauthorised absence.

Please make every effort to improve this situation. We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and hope to see an improvement in the coming weeks. If there is no improvement, it is likely the Local Authority School Attendance Improvement Officer will wish to make contact with you.

If we can support you in any way to do this, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Head Teacher

## Appendix H. Persistent Lateness

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

### Re: Persistent Lateness

I am writing to inform you that your child \_\_\_\_\_ is persistently late for school. Between \_\_\_\_\_(date) and \_\_\_\_\_(date) he/she was late on \_\_\_\_\_ occasions and missed \_\_\_\_\_ hours of education.

When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrive late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher - everyone's education is compromised.

5 minutes late every day = 3 DAYS OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR
10 minutes late every day = 6.5 DAYS OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR
15 minutes late every day = 10 DAYS OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR
20 minutes late every day = 13 DAYS OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR
30 minutes late every day = 19 DAYS OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR

Further lateness may result in you being served with a Penalty Notice. Parents/carers have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Meanwhile, if anything can be done to support \_\_\_\_\_ getting to school on time, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Head Teacher

Appendix I - Leave of Absence Form



Redburne Upper School and Community College



Alameda Middle School



Woodland Middle School



The Firs Lower School



Templefield Redburne



Fittwick Lower School



Kingsmoor Lower School



Maiden Lower School



Russell Lower School

**APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR YOUR CHILD DURING TERM TIME**

As a parent or carer, please complete this form and return it to the school office **AT LEAST SIX WEEKS** before the date when you want the period of absence to start. Please see our Attendance Policy on the school website: [www.maidenlower.com](http://www.maidenlower.com)

Student's Full Name: ..... Date of Birth: .....

Class: .....

Period of absence for ..... days from: ..... to: ..... (inclusive)

**Reason for Absence** (If request is for a family holiday, please explain the exceptional circumstances why it **MUST** be in term time. If required please attach additional sheets with evidence from your .....

Please indicate if your child has siblings in any of our Redburne Partnership schools

The Firs	Russell	Maiden	Alameda
Templefield	Kingsmoor	Fittwick	Woodland
Redburne			

**Sections below to be completed by school staff only**

Current Attendance .....% Previous holidays checked

Signed: ..... Date: .....

**Decision Regarding Request For Leave Of Absence In Term Time**

Number of days requested: .....

Absence request authorized

Absence request unauthorized

Absence request can be partly authorized

Reason for decision (if appropriate) .....

Signed: ..... Head Teacher

**Please note** Amendments to the 2006 regulations which were adopted in September 2013, removed all references to family holidays and extended leave as well as to the threshold of 10 school days. The amendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. For further information contact Annette Cooperhead, Access and Inclusion Service, on 0300 300 4791.

## Appendix J - Persistent and Severe Absence

### Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason. **No absence below 90% will be authorised unless in extenuating circumstances** (such as long term illness). All PA will be tracked and reported to the LA Attendance Officer.

### Severe absence (SA)

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

### Reducing persistent and severe absence

Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance. The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps
- Hold regular meetings with the parents at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
  - Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
  - Assessing whether a Pupil Support Plan or EHCP assessment may be appropriate
  - Implement sanctions, where necessary /appropriate

## Appendix K - Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency

<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays