



Forncett C.E.V.A. Primary School

# Forncett St. Peter CEVA Primary School

## Attendance Policy

Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_ J Jones \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher

Date: March 2019

\_\_\_\_\_ M. Bolger \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of governors

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**Our Vision** is that we should love our neighbour as we love ourselves by treating others as we would like to be treated.

## **Statement of intent**

Fornsett St. Peter CEVA Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all children and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all as outlined in the 2010 Equalities Act. We endeavour to provide an environment where all children feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to children and their parents and carers, the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Each year the school will set attendance/absence targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents and carers follow the framework set in part 1, section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

(a) to age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our children.
- Recognising good, regular attendance.

## **1. Legal framework**

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010

- Education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 & 2016)
  - Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
  - Children and Young Persons Act 1963
  - DfE (2018) 'School attendance'
  - DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
  - DfE (2018) 'Keeping children safe in education'
  - DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- 1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies and/or procedures:
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
  - Concerns and Complaints Procedures and Policy
  - Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy
  - Procedure for children missing in education

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

- 2.1. The governing board has overall responsibility for:
- The implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures of Forncett St. Peter CEVA Primary School.
  - Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
  - Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Concerns and Complaints Policy & Procedure.
  - Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' (2018) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
  - Having regard to the GDPR and record keeping arrangements.
- 2.2. The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and procedures of the school, and distributing these to parents and carers.
- 2.3. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for:
- Following the Attendance Policy and ensuring children do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
  - Modelling good attendance behaviour.

- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual children to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- 2.4. Parents and carers are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- 2.5. Parents and carers are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.
- 2.6. Children are responsible, as far as possible, for their own attendance at school and at any agreed activities throughout the school year.

### 3. Definitions

3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- **“Absence”** as:
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Not attending school for any reason.
- An **“authorised absence”** as:
  - 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.
- An **“unauthorised absence”** as:
  - Parents and carers 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.
  - 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.
- **“Persistent absenteeism”** as:
  - Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

## **4. Training of staff**

- 4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk children as part of their induction and refresher training.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

## **5. Child expectations**

- 5.1. Children are expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year, to agree to keep their attendance at, or above, 96 percent throughout the year.

## **6. Absence procedures**

- 6.1. Parents and carers are required to contact the school as soon as possible by telephone on the first day of their child's absence (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> sessions). In the event of no phone being available, email is acceptable, but parents and carers must understand that this may not get checked until later in the day and could be missed (into Junk box), or not received.
- 6.2. Any absence notes will be kept on file for the academic year and then destroyed unless there are concerns about the child's absence. In cases of concern about attendance or for vulnerable children, the notes will be retained for a longer period.
- 6.3. Alternatively, parents and carers may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.
- 6.4. A phone call will be made to the parent or carer of any child who has *not* reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school. If there is no answer, the school will continue to call and make active enquiries until the fifth day (9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> session) of unexplained absence, when the case will be referred to the LA attendance service.
- 6.5. In the case of persistent absence or attendance which drops below 90% for any reason, arrangements will be made for parents and carers to meet with the headteacher and the case may be referred to a member of the attendance service who will meet with the family.
- 6.6. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of children who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.
- 6.7. Where a child 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 child from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

- 6.8. The school staff will ensure that all children receive a warm welcome back after any period of absence for whatever reason. We want all our children to feel wanted, valued and to quickly feel settled back into routine. Staff will help children to catch up with learning wherever possible.

## **7. Contact information**

7.1. Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.

## **8. Attendance register**

The 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 children 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:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Approved off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

- V = Education visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Duel registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Child not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant children 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, e.g. induction days.

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.

## **9. Attendance team services**

9.1. If they are persistently absent, children will be referred to the attendance service who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement.

9.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, an attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents and carers.

## **10. Lateness**

10.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

10.2. The school day starts at 08.55. Children should be in their classroom at this time and the register is marked. Children will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

10.3. The register closes at 09:25. Children will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.

10.4. After lunch, registers are marked at 13.15. Children will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

10.5. The register closes at 13:45. Children will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

10.6. Children attending after 09:25 or 13.45 will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

## **11. Term-time leave**

11.1. At Forncett St. Peter CEVA Primary School, our aim is to prepare children for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents and carers

to observe the school holidays as prescribed. Application forms are available from the school office.

- 11.2. The headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 11.3. The headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 11.4. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a child can be away from school during term time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.
- 11.5. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the child's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 11.6. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
  - Immediately before and during assessment periods
  - When a child's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
  - Where a child's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason
- 11.7. If parents and carers take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

## **12. Leave during lunch times**

Parents and carers 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 child will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents and carers are required to submit a written request, outlining the reasons for 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 or carer in to the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as 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 or carer in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Our lunch time hours are 12:15 - 13:15. Children 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.

Parents and carers will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the child 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 child leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No child will leave the premises before the member of staff has given their permission.

If a child is expected to be leaving the school premises, they are required to do so – children will go home as soon as they leave the site and will not loiter outside the premises.

If a child expected to leave no longer has reason to do so, e.g. a medical appointment is cancelled, they should inform a member of staff at the school office immediately.

Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents and carers are not entitled to appeal the decision.

Parents and carers are able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

### **13. Truancy**

13.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

13.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of children, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

13.3. All children are expected to be in their classes by 08.55am and 13:15, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.

13.4. Any child with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

13.5. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting.

13.6. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

13.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents and carers of the child, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.

- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

## **14. Missing children**

14.1. Children are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the headteacher.

14.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a child going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing child will inform the headteacher or senior teacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - The library
  - Any outbuildings
  - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the child has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents and carers of the child will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents and carers using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents and carers have had no contact from the child, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing child's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the child going missing.

- 14.3. If the missing child has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 14.4. When the child has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the child to ensure they are safe and well.
- 14.5. The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that children understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 14.6. Parents and carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the child has been located.
- 14.7. The headteacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 14.8. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Primary Behavioural Policy.
- 14.9. Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence without contact will be handled in accordance with clauses [6.6-6.8](#) of this policy.
- 14.10. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

## **15. Religious observances**

- 15.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- 15.2. Parents and carers are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

## **16. Appointments**

- 16.1. As far as possible, parents and carers will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 16.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.
- 16.3. If the appointment requires the child to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent or carer.
- 16.4. Children will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

## **17. Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities**

- 17.1. Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all children engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person,

receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence(s).

- 17.2. Where a child requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance is required to request a licence from the LA.
- 17.3. The organiser is required to allow sufficient time for the LA to process the request – the LA will refuse to consider an application if the performance or activity is less than 21 days away.
- 17.4. The LA will only approve a licence application once it is satisfied that:
  - The child's education, health and wellbeing will not suffer; and
  - The conditions of the licence will be observed.
- 17.5. The LA will impose any conditions it considers necessary to ensure that the child is fit to take part in the performance/activity, that there will be proper provision for the child's wellbeing, and that the child's education will not suffer.
- 17.6. The school will make additional arrangements for children 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 the arrangements are suitable for the child.
- 17.7. The organiser of the performance/activity is responsible for ensuring these arrangements are carried out.
- 17.8. The child will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the child would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence.
- 17.9. The above requirement will be met by ensuring a child receives an education:
  - For not less than six hours a week; and
  - During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
  - On days where the child would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
  - For not more than five hours on any such day.
- 17.10. Where the applicant is unable to specify the dates of the performance/activity, and the LA decides to grant the application, the LA will specify that the child can only take part in the activity for a specified number of days within a six-month period.

- 17.11. Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation is needed from the school.
- 17.12. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day.
- 17.13. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a child's attendance would fall below 96 percent.
- 17.14. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.
- 17.15. The LA will be satisfied that arrangements for chaperones, accommodation, place of performance and rehearsal, and travel are suitable before it grants the application.
- 17.16. The LA may decide to place restrictions on any performance or activity – this can include maximum hours and breaks.
- 17.17. The maximum number of consecutive days that a child can perform is six – this applies to performances only.
- 17.18. Children who perform are entitled to a break of at least 14 days following the last performance where the child has been performing on the maximum number of consecutive days over a period of eight weeks, unless the period to which the licence applies is less than 60 days.
- 17.19. A licence is also required where a child will be absent from school and conducting a performance or activity abroad.
- 17.20. The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements; they may carry out inspections of the premises:
- Where rehearsals during the performance period are taking place;
  - Where performances or activities are taking place; or
  - Where the child is receiving their education, in order to check that licensing conditions are being met.
- 17.21. The LA has the power to amend or revoke existing licences at any time.
- 17.22. If the LA refuses to grant a licence, it will provide reasons for this decision in writing to the individual/organisation applying for the licence.
- 17.23. The organiser of the performance/activity has the right to appeal the decision to a magistrates' court, including its refusal, revocation or variation, and against any condition under which a licence is granted or an approval is given.

## **18. Young carers**

18.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.

18.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.

18.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each child will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

## **19. Rewarding good attendance**

The school acknowledges good and 100 percent attendance in the following ways:

- Newsletter items
- Personalised termly letters home
- Record on annual school report
- A personal 'well done'

## **20. Monitoring and review**

20.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

20.2. Forngett St. Peter's attendance target is 96 percent.

20.3. This policy is reviewed every year by the headteacher and governors; the next scheduled review date for this policy is March 2020.

