



# FLORENCE MELLY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Attendance Policy

RATIFIED: JANUARY 2017  
REVIEW: JANUARY 2019

## **Attendance Policy**

**January 2017**

### **Our Attendance Mission Statement**

Florence Melly Community Primary School seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels valued.

School staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. To meet these objectives Florence Melly Community Primary School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

The person leading attendance in our school is Mr J Doyle (Pastoral Support Officer/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead).

### **1. Our Aims:**

- (1) To improve the overall percentage of pupils attending school.
- (2) To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- (3) To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- (4) To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- (5) To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- (6) To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
- (7) To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

### **2. Aim: To improve the overall percentage of pupils at school**

- (1) The attendance target for our school is 97%, however, we expect children to attend 100% of the time.
- (2) We apply the Whole School Attendance Policy consistently.
- (3) We establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
- (4) We relate attendance issues directly to the school's core values, ethos and curriculum.
- (5) We monitor attendance in measurable outcomes and review with the Governing Body.
- (6) We refer to Education Welfare Service pupils whose attendance is less than 90%.
- (7) Holidays during term time will affect learning, therefore Florence Melly **will not** authorise holidays in school time. This is in line with Local Authority guidelines. If there are exceptional circumstances (Eg, Armed Forces Leave) parent/carers are requested to contact the school in writing.
- (8) If a child is removed for an unauthorised holiday the School can ask the Education Welfare Service to issue a Penalty Notice, under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, which carries a fine of £60, per parent, per child. Non-payment of this fine can result in prosecution.
- (9) Parents are given a copy of the Graduated Response Attendance Support Programme (ASP) See attached which outlines the process for dealing with attendance.
- (10) The Attendance Team meet weekly to discuss any children whose absence is a cause for concern and will endeavour to contact parent/carers to discuss the matter and offer support. A letter will be sent each half term for those children whose attendance is causing concern. (See Appendix 1) If the attendance does not improve a second letter may be sent (See Appendix 2) Pupils whose attendance is less than 90% are considered by the Government to be 'Persistent Absentees' and will be referred to the EWO.

- (11) Addressing the issues behind non-attendance and Persistent Absenteeism are a priority for the school in conjunction with the school's Education Welfare Officer.
- (12) The School will ask for supporting evidence/documentation to verify pupil absence. For example, copies of prescription labels, appointment letters. It is the final decision of the Headteacher whether an absence is authorised or not.

**3. Aim: To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks**

- (1) We maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration.
- (2) If a pupil is absent without reason, we make contact via telephone with the parents/carers on the first day of absence to ascertain the reason for non-attendance and the expected date of return. On return to school if we are unable to obtain a reason for absence a reminder letter is sent, followed by a further letter if necessary. If we are not given a reason for the absence or are unsatisfied with the reason given the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised'.
- (3) We ensure clearly defined late registration procedures, writing on a half-termly basis to parents of all children who are persistently late.
- (4) We define clearly the roles and responsibilities of each staff member within the school staffing structure.
- (5) We explore a range of opportunities for parental partnership for example: seeking to foster and develop positive partnerships with parents; encouraging/inviting parents in to school to discuss attendance concerns; include attendance matters within school newsletters and website.
- (6) We meet with the Education Welfare Officer on a weekly basis.
- (7) We review individual pupil and whole school attendance on a weekly basis.
- (8) We are familiar with the Education Welfare Services referral and recording system
- (9) We include absence data in the pupils' annual school reports.

**4. Aim: To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils**

- (1) We will highlight the importance of good attendance using:
  - Our Class Dojo Reward System
  - Newsletters,
  - Twitter,
  - School Website,
  - ParentApp,
  - School Prospectus,
  - Parent consultation evenings/Open days,
  - Staff being available to talk to pupils/parents,
  - Personal, Health, Social & Citizenship Education lessons/Circle Time
  - The School Term Dates newsletter.
- (2) We can arrange for information to be provided in a range of languages or in different formats.
- (3) We seek improved communication with parents. We will maintain accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents. Parents are encouraged to inform the school of any changes to their contact information as and when they occur by completing the update form available from the School Office or by advising us via the school app (ParentApp). Every Autumn Term we undertake a whole school data update exercise to ensure information is correct. We involve parents in attendance issues from the earliest stage – making first day contact by telephone in the event of unknown absence.
- (4) We keep staff up to date with the attendance strategy and provide Continuing Professional Development opportunities in 'Promoting Positive Behaviour & Attendance'.

**5. Aim: To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data**

- (1) We use a computerised registration system enabling the analysis of attendance information Data can be analysed by authorised/unauthorised, class/year group, absence code, gender, pupil premium, SEN etc.
- (2) We use appropriate absence codes as required by the Department for Education.
- (3) We will be consistent in the collection and provision of information.
- (4) We analyse the effects of persistent absence on attainment.

**6. Aim: To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school**

- (1) We will produce an annual report to governors on attendance. We will also provide a report to the School Improvement Challenge Board, if necessary.
- (2) We will regularly report attendance data to Parent/Carers in the School newsletter and on the website.
- (3) We display materials at focal points – school foyer/noticeboards etc.
- (4) We encourage parents into the school to discuss individual cases.
- (5) When necessary, we will discuss attendance issues in inclusion meetings, pupil target meetings and/or in relevant staff meetings.
- (6) We will regularly update parents/carers of our latest attendance initiatives.
- (7) We will reward pupils for excellent school attendance and encourage those who need to improve.

**7. Aim: To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies**

- (1) We have a designated Attendance Team who liaise with Education Welfare Service and other agencies.
- (2) We carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.
- (3) We gather and record relevant information to assist the Education Welfare Service.
- (4) We hold weekly attendance review meetings with our Education Welfare Officer.
- (5) Our Education Welfare Officer will arrange multi-agency planning meetings, pursue 'Fast Track' or request/issue Penalty Notices (if appropriate).
- (6) We will establish and maintain a list of named contacts within the local community e.g. Community Police Officers, Truancy Officer, Duty Social Worker

**8. Aim: To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence**

- (1) We will be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of pupils returning to school after a significant period of absence.
- (2) We will involve/inform all staff/agencies in the reintegration process.
- (3) We will provide opportunities for support via the Pastoral Support Officer.
- (4) We may consider peer support and mentoring.
- (5) We will involve parents as far as possible.
- (6) We will provide guidance for teachers, TA's etc who may be working with the child.

**9. Why regular attendance is so important:**

- (1) **Learning:-** Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parents legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

- (2) **Safeguarding**:- A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding at our school is given the highest priority and failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding concern. This may result in the matter being referred to our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mr A Leach who will use the LSCB's 'Levels of Need Guidance' to determine how the matter is dealt with.

## **10. Information for Parents/Carers**

Understanding types of absence:

- (1) Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.
- (2) Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.
- (3) Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to Liverpool Education Welfare Services using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. These include:
  - Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
  - Truancy before or during the school day
  - Absences which have never been properly explained
  - Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
  - Shopping, looking after other children or birthday
  - Day trips and holidays in term time
- (4) Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

## **11. Persistent Absenteeism:**

- (1) A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year regardless of the reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parental support and co-operation to tackle this.
- (2) We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed.
- (3) PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by our Attendance Team.

## **12. Absence Procedures:**

If your child is absent you must:

- (1) Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence either by telephone or via the school app (Parentapp).
- (2) Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence if you haven't already informed the school.
- (3) Or, you can call into school and report to reception.

### **If your child is absent we will:**

- (1) Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you, asking for the reason for absence and the expected date of return.
- (2) Send a reminder letter before declaring an unauthorised absence. Medical evidence may be requested to support the absence.
- (3) Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Pastoral Support Officer and/or Headteacher.
- (4) Refer the matter to Liverpool Education and Welfare officer if attendance moves below 90%.

### **13. Contact Details:**

- (1) There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your up to date contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed.

### **14. Punctuality:**

- (1) Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.
- (2) How we manage lateness:
  - The school day starts at 8:55am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.
  - Your child will receive a late mark if they have not entered the school with their class line, they must enter via the office door and give their name and class to the adult on duty who will enter the details on our InVentry system.
  - If your child has a medical appointment that will make them late for school you must inform the office **BEFORE** the appointment and provide a copy of the medical letter.
  - If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Pastoral Support Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. If the problem persists you could face a penalty notice from the authority.

### **15. School Attendance Initiatives:**

- (1) The minimum level of attendance for this school is 97% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.
- (2) Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the city. Florence Melly Primary School expects attendance of 100%.
- (3) Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our Home - School letters and we ask for your full support.
- (4) We offer a whole school initiative, 'Awesome Attendance' to encourage all children to attend regularly and to raise the profile of attendance throughout the school. This is further supplemented by our 'Dojo' reward system.

### **16. Key points of our Attendance project:**

- (1) Each Class monitors their own attendance on a weekly basis, at the end of the week the class with the highest attendance is announced in our assemblies.

- (2) The results are recorded in the foyer and the classes with the top 3 attendance results are awarded Bronze, Silver and Gold Medals/Certificates
- (3) The class with the most winners at the end of each half term are rewarded with a whole class event
- (4) School operates a 'Dojo' system where children are awarded a 'Dojo' point each day if they attend school and five extra points if they are in school all week - this is the highest reward available to the pupils. These points can be traded in during the academic year for prizes.
- (5) The school also encourages attendance on a termly basis by awarding individual pupils with 100% attendance gold, silver and bronze certificates. Those children at the end of the year with 100% attendance receive a trophy. During the year we will operate attendance initiatives by selecting a weekly winner from each year group and they will receive a treat (e.g. golden table, hot chocolate with the Head and vouchers).
- (6) Individual Persistent Absentee children may also be involved in other incentive programmes throughout the year.

**Appendix 1**  
**Attendance Letter**

Ref: AL 1

Dear Parent/Guardian,

**Re: Child's name – Attendance concern**

I am enclosing a copy of your (child's name) attendance record for your attention.

As you are aware, good school attendance is a priority at Florence Melly and all absence **authorised** and **unauthorised** is monitored on a daily basis.

You may have already been in contact with the school office regarding these periods of absence, and please continue to do so. However, if there is an ongoing illness and/or regular absence for any reason, it is important that we discuss this.

Please contact the school office or your class teacher for further information.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Doyle

**Pastoral Support/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead**

## **Appendix 2 Stop Authorising Letter**

Name and Address

Date

Dear

**Re: Child's name – Attendance concern**

Further to previous correspondence (child's name) attendance at Florence Melly Primary School remains a cause for concern as there have been further absences.

The Headteacher may now refuse to authorise absence without medical evidence. For occasional periods of absence, appointment cards, prescription and/or a label from medication may be accepted. However, for excessive absence, we may request confirmation from your G.P./ Consultant.

Should (child's name) have on-going health issues and/or any other difficulties where support may be required, please do not hesitate to contact the school office so that we may discuss and consider options.

Please ensure that you read the attached information regarding the Legal framework schools are obliged to adhere to.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Doyle  
**Pastoral Support/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead**

## **Appendix 3**

**Florence Melly Community Primary School has a:**

**Graduated Response Attendance Support Programme (ASP) 2017-2018**

**Florence Melly Primary School expects pupils to have 100% attendance**

### **Usual Attendance Response**

All absences are investigated by FIRST DAY RESPONSE by the Attendance Team. Any serious concerns are passed to the Pastoral Support Officer/Safeguarding Lead immediately. If necessary we will make further contact by telephone or a home visit for serious concerns. The class teacher will follow up any absences with the Attendance Team and encourage and promote high levels of attendance and punctuality for their class.

Any attendance that falls below 93% will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer.

### **ATL.1 – Attendance Letter 1**

This will be issued by the Attendance Team in liaison with the class teacher following 3 periods of absence during one term and/or subsequent absences each half term or where attendance drops to below 95%. This letter informs parents/ carers that attendance monitoring has commenced; and invites parents to discuss any concerns with the Attendance Team or Pastoral Support.

### **ATL.2 – Stop Authorising Letter 2**

This letter is issued by the Attendance Team in liaison with the Educational Welfare Officer after 4 or more periods of absence in one half term and/or subsequent absences during each half term and including consecutive terms or where attendance falls below 93%. This letter advises that attendance remains a concern and that future absence may only be authorised upon receipt of medical evidence. Parent/carers are again invited to discuss any health concerns and/or difficulties with the Attendance Team/Pastoral Support Team.

### **School Attendance Meeting with Attendance Lead/Pastoral Support**

The Attendance Team will arrange a meeting with parents/carers of those pupils whose attendance continues to be a concern. The meeting will provide an opportunity for parents/carers to provide medical evidence and/or discuss any issues where support may be required, either from school or external agencies.

### **Educational Welfare Officer**

Where attendance falls below 93% we will contact the Educational Welfare Officer who will follow their process in trying to engage parents and return children to school as soon as possible. This can take many forms such as, home visits, monitoring periods and panel meetings (held in school) to name a few. Where attendance continues to be a concern then Local Authority guidelines will be followed and this could lead to prosecution.

### **Home Visits**

Parents and Carers are responsible for contacting school regarding absence; The Attendance Team may conduct a home visit where parents **have not** made contact and/or the First Day Response have not made contact in respect of any absence exceeding 5 days. Advice will be taken from the Safeguarding Lead before any contact takes place.

### **Penalty Notice Requests**

A referral may be made to the Local Authority where unauthorised absence meets the following criteria:

For periods of unauthorised absence of 10 sessions. Leave taken during term for a family holiday coded 'G' (not agreed or days in excess of agreement).

Late arrival to school coded 'U' (late after registers closed). If your child is regularly late for school parents/carers may receive a Penalty Notice (£60 fine) and may risk prosecution.

### **Prosecution**

At Florence Melly we endeavour to support our pupils and recognise that there are families who will require additional help. We will consider a range of strategies where possible, implement these prior to initiating any legal proceedings.