



ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

Flimby Primary School 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.

We are committed to:

- 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.
- 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 pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education (2020)'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following trust and school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Home Visit Policy

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The local governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- 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.

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.

The attendance officer is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents 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.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

3. 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

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed

- 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:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

4. 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.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

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.

5. PUPIL EXPECTATIONS

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will understand the importance of being in school through PSHE lessons. They will know that their attendance should be at, or above, 97% throughout the year.

6. PUPILS AT RISK OF PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

The SLT will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents (red, amber and monitored letters)
 - Arranging meetings with parents to put an action plan in place.
 - Engaging with LA inclusion teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

A member of the governing board will engage in attendance meetings to reinforce messages and support the school and families.

Where a pupil at risk of PA 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.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Talk with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and support to have the voice of the child.
- Establish attendance plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead fortnightly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in Need
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

7. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.

A text message, and a subsequent phone call if there is no response, will be made to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any 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 Inclusion Officer, when attendance levels of pupils fall below 85% or those who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

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

8. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The school will build 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.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Inform the school of their child's absence.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

9. **ATTENDANCE REGISTER**

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

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- 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 = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- = 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 = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- O = Unauthorised absence
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil 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 pupils who are absent.

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.

10. INCLUSION OFFICER

If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the inclusion officer who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the inclusion officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence, and will provide regular reports to the Headteacher to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

11. LATENESS

The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

The school day starts at 8:50am for KS2 and 8:55am for KS1. If the class door has closed you will need to sign your child in at the main office and your child will be marked as late. If your child is more than 10 minutes late then they will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

12. TERM-TIME LEAVE

- The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, the Head teacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time in most cases. The Head teacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Examples may include:
- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative.

In difficult family situations the Head teacher may use their discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

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

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10%

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Head teacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

13. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

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. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

14. APPOINTMENTS

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

15. MODELLING, SPORT AND ACTING PERFORMANCES/ACTIVITIES

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

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

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil 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 pupil 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.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Head teacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The Head teacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 97%. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Head teacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

16. YOUNG CARERS

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. A caring and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

17. REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance in the following ways:

- 100% attendance certificates every half term
- Termly rewards for 100% attendance
- Letters to parents
- Weekly class attendance champions
- Half termly rewards for the class with the highest attendance

18. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 97%.

This policy will be reviewed every two years. The next scheduled review date for this policy is June 2023.

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

ATTENDANCE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC

All pupils are required to attend school. As such, the arrangements set out in the main body of this policy (above) will be adhered to. This appendix has been developed in line with the latest government [guidance](#) to set out the additional measures that have been put in place to support pupils' attendance at school.

The school will have due regard for the DfE's '[Recording attendance during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)' guidance when recording attendance during the pandemic.

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

Attendance is mandatory for all pupils. This means the usual rules on school attendance (as set out in the main body of this policy) apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- The school's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence, in line with the procedures in the main body of this policy.
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with the LA's code of conduct.

The school will ensure pupils do not attend the school site where they are displaying symptoms of, or have tested positive for, coronavirus, or are quarantining following travel abroad, or are in a household, childcare or support bubble with an individual who is displaying symptoms of, or has tested positive for, coronavirus.

SHIELDING OR SELF-ISOLATING PUPILS

The school will stay up-to-date with all relevant national and local public health advice regarding shielding and self-isolation, communicating any relevant changes to all stakeholders.

Absences relating to pupils following clinical and/or public health advice will not be penalised. Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, they will be immediately offered access to remote learning, in line with the Pupil Remote Learning Policy.

Absences due to shielding or self-isolation will be recorded with Code X.

The school will follow the measures set out in the Infection Control Policy in all circumstances where self-isolation is required.

Where a vulnerable pupil is required to self-isolate, the school will notify their social worker (if they have one), ensure a method of maintaining contact with the pupil, and ensure the pupil has access to remote education.

RELUCTANCE TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

The school will remind parents of their legal duty to ensure their child attends school, and parents will be advised to contact the school if they have concerns about their child returning to school.

If a parent raises a concern, a relevant staff member will hold a discussion with the parent to discuss their concerns and provide reassurance on the measures that are in place to reduce risk in the school.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The school will place particular emphasis on supporting the attendance and re-engagement of vulnerable pupils, pupils at risk of PA, and pupils who have not engaged regularly with school during the coronavirus pandemic.

The school will use the DfE's list of sub-codes in the management information system (MIS) to record non-attendance related to coronavirus. These are:

- Code X01: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school
- Code X02: Pupil self-isolating with coronavirus symptoms
- Code X03: Pupil self-isolating due to potential contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus inside the school setting
- Code X04: Pupil self-isolating due to potential contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus outside the school setting
- Code X05: Pupil required to self-isolate as part of quarantine requirement (after arriving in the UK from a non-exempt country or territory)
- Code X06: Pupil not in school because they have been advised specifically by their doctor or public health authority that they are clinically extremely vulnerable and should not attend school
- Code X07: Pupil advised specifically not to attend school as part of restrictions to education set out in government guidance
- Code I01: Non-coronavirus related illness
- Code I02: Illness (confirmed case of coronavirus)

ATTENDANCE MONITORING PROCEDURES

Flimby Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the Headteacher detailing fortnightly and annual attendance to date.
2. 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 daily.
3. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
4. If a pupil's attendance falls between 95 – 96.99%, an amber letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is being monitored. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls between 93 – 94.99%, a red letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is of a concern and now being monitored, and that if it falls below 90% then there will be a meeting and action plan put in place.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 93% a warning letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is of a concern and being monitored, and that if it falls below 90% then there will be a meeting and action plan put in place.
7. The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the Headteacher, classroom teacher and governor and set targets for an improvement in attendance. If parents are unwilling to cooperate then a referral will be made to the Inclusion Officer.
8. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a text is sent home to acknowledge the improvement in attendance.
9. If targets are not met, there will be a referral to the Inclusion Officer. This may result in a fixed-penalty notice being issued.