

Federation of Follifoot and Spofforth CE Primary Schools

Attendance

A Guide for Parents and Carers

Good school attendance helps children learn and achieve and for this reason our schools are committed to improving attendance. This guide is designed to inform and raise awareness. It is important that parents and families share our understanding of the importance of good attendance as well as our expectations and the reasons for them.

If you have any questions about this or any of our additional information with regard to attendance you should arrange to speak to the Head teacher Mr Griffiths. Appointments can be made via either school office and can take place at either school or by telephone.

Children who regularly attend school are likely to:

- learn more
- make and sustain secure friendships
- make expected or better than expected progress
- be better prepared for the next stage of their education
- form life long habits of being punctual and attending well

Poor attendance often results in children:

- getting left behind socially and academically
- having difficulty with learning
- not meeting friends and becoming isolated
- forming poor habits for later life

'Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind'

DFE guidance on school attendance 2014.

Examples of poor attendance are;

- Occasional days off on a regular basis
- Not returning immediately when the child is well enough to be in school (this may be part way through a day)
- Long periods out of school
- Holidays in term time
- Regular lateness

Attendance Does Matter

Children are required to attend school for 190 days each year. At our schools we are constantly striving to provide your child with the best possible opportunities for achieving a high level of academic and personal success. With this in mind, attendance and punctuality are qualities which all schools, colleges, universities and employers value highly. Please support us and your child to achieve their maximum potential by continuing to ensure they attend school every day on time.

Every Day Counts - 'The odd day off doesn't hurt, does it?'

YES IT DOES. – Attendance Percentages as missed days and lessons

Attendance during one year	Equal numbers of days absent	Approximate number of weeks	Approximate number of lessons	Absence during 7 years of primary education
97%	5	1	20	7 weeks – half a term
95%	10	2	40	14 weeks – a full term
90%	20	4	80	28 weeks – two full terms or two thirds of a year
80%	40	8	160	56 weeks – A year and a half of education.

97% is the percentage schools need to achieve to be in the top 20% of schools nationally. A drop of just 2% points to 95% puts the school in the bottom 20% of schools nationally.

Please be aware that **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)** is defined as a pupil who has an attendance percentage of 90% or below. This is a government figure. The PA figure and the actions taken by the school to reduce this figure is a focus during an Ofsted inspection.

We will contact the parents/carers of all pupils whose attendance meets this criteria on a half termly basis to offer support and advice. We will support and monitor pupils until a pattern of high attendance has been sustained.

Support & Encourage

We aim to support and encourage children to attend well. We do this by informing them each week how many children in their class have achieved 100% attendance for that week. The class with the highest % of children achieving 100% attendance for that week will be presented with the 'Golden Register' in assembly. They will receive a class certificate. Through the school council we will evaluate how pupils view this and gain their perspective and ideas on how else we will encourage and celebrate high levels of attendance.

FAQ – Well that's not very fair what if my child is genuinely ill?

We fully understand and accept that from time to time genuine illness will prevent children from attending school. The aim of tracking and informing children on a weekly basis is to allow all children throughout the year to experience achieving 100% attendance on many occasions.

A class can still win the award even if children have been off as it is a measure of how many children have achieved 100% attendance and is not reliant on the whole class achieving 100% to win. This approach encourages children and gives the issue of attendance high profile within the school community while also reinforcing the message that coming to school every day is an expectation.

Leave During Term Time – Summary

Please also see the full additional information when considering applying for leave in term time. This is available on our school website and also in paper copy from the school office.

Taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt educational progress. **No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right.** Applications for leave must be made in advance by a parent with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances.

The decision of the Head teacher is final. Parents who take a child on leave in term time without the permission of the school risk being issued with a penalty notice fine for unauthorised absences. The **threshold for a Head teacher to refer the absence to the Local authority to consider a penalty notice is 10 sessions or more in a block (5 days) or amalgamated over a period of four months.**

FAQ – Will I be fined if I take my child on holiday for just one week?

If the absence has not been authorised as exceptional and has been for five days or more then the Head teacher has a legal duty to make the referral to the Local Authority who will decide if a penalty notice will be issued.

Illness

Of course from time to time pupils will be genuinely too ill to attend school. This will be more than a mild or slight cough or cold. School has no desire for genuinely ill children to be in school. Parents are expected to **make daily contact with school** throughout the **whole period of absence.** If contact has not been made school will contact parents everyday of the absence to check on the welfare of the child and offer support to families.

Where can I find out more?

Our school websites have an attendance section that contain further guidance from DFE and the Local Authority on this issue.

We thank you in advance for your support on this issue.