

School Attendance Policy



Black Firs School

Introduction

At Black Firs, we believe that clear guidance for staff, children and parents about the importance of regular, punctual school attendance shows the caring nature of our School. It is also an acknowledgement of the vital need for all children to attend regularly, be punctual and therefore maximise the benefits of the education we provide. At the heart of good attendance is the partnership between home and school in ensuring a positive attitude to education and its long-term benefits.

This policy sets out our School's aims for maintaining a high level of regular attendance and punctuality and also the important administrative steps to be taken to monitor and record levels of attendance.

Aims

We expect and value good attendance and promptness from our children. This is clearly stated on the School website for parents together with advice regarding authorised and unauthorised absence. The main aim of the policy is to set out clear procedures and practices in order to ensure the promotion of good attendance.

The School will work with our Partnership Family Support worker and Cheshire East Attendance & Children Out of School Service in addressing any problems which may arise regarding the attendance or persistent lateness of individual children.

Strategies and Approaches

It is essential that registration procedures are followed rigorously if the school is to monitor attendance and punctuality. Black Firs Primary School adheres to the routine below:

1. School starts at 8:45am
2. Morning register is called promptly via SIMs by 9:00am. The register is then saved and available for the Office to view.
3. Children who arrive after the register has been taken are sent to the Office to ensure they are marked in the Attendance book.
4. Arrival after register has been taken but before 9:30am constitutes a Late Mark.
5. At 9:30am, the Office Admin staff will check registers for any children who have not been marked as Present or Late.
6. After visiting their classrooms to ensure that they have not arrived in School, and checking for emails that could have been sent confirming absence, the parents will then be contacted to obtain a reason for the child's absence.
7. Children arriving after 9:30am will be added to the Attendance book and marked as Unauthorised in the register.
8. Afternoon register is called at 1:00pm (1:15pm in KS1) and then saved, and available for the Office to view.
9. Any children who leave the School premises during the course of the school day after being registered present, must be signed out in the Attendance book in the School Office.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Children must attend school for 380 sessions (190 days) per year unless they are authorised to be absent. This authority will normally be given for periods of illness or other medical reasons. Parents are permitted to request a leave of absence for 'exceptional circumstances', although this is discouraged as it is impossible to recover this lost time upon the child's return to school. The DfE guidance, May 2022, clearly states '*As head teachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday*' section 30 pg13. The leave of absence is requested by completing a copy of the form in at the end of this policy, which is then sent to the Chair of Governors. This must be done at least one month

prior to the date of the leave requested. The front page of the form is then detached and sent home to inform the parents whether the leave is authorised or not.

[Request for Leave of Absence Form can be found here on our website.](#)

If a child is absent due to illness the School must be informed first thing on the first day of absence, either by telephone or email, and subsequently if informed by telephone, then also in writing (by email or note upon the child's return). The School Office does reiterate this during the initial telephone call. This note should include the dates of absence, date of return, precise reason for absence (i.e. not "...due to illness" or "...was poorly", etc.) and the signature of the parent or legal guardian who is sending the note.

A note from parents does not automatically authorise a child's absence, only the Headteacher can authorise any absence. Reasons given by parents will be considered carefully before authorising a child's non-attendance at school. The parent will be advised if the absence is not recorded as authorised.

Record Keeping

All communications from parents whether electronic, completed standard forms or handwritten notes, are kept in the school office, filed according to their child's year group. Teachers are responsible for passing these communications on to the School Office.

Following Up Non-Attendance and Persistent Absence

Usually when a parent has been contacted by telephone on the day of their child's absence, a satisfactory reason has been obtained for the absence. However, if contact could not be made with the parent, then the following steps would be taken:

1. If contact has still not been made with parents by mid-morning, the Office Admin staff would attempt to make contact again; if unsuccessful then contacts other than the parents will be tried until a reason has been obtained.
2. Children who are persistently late or absent will be monitored, and if attendance is deemed to be below average, parents would be asked to meet with teachers to discuss the situation in an attempt to help resolve the matter.
3. Should this not improve the situation, a letter would be sent to inform parents of their responsibilities and legal obligations, and of the School's concern towards the welfare of their child and their education. This would include their child's specific attendance certificate, and suggest a follow-up meeting for further actions to be agreed.
4. The Office Admin staff would liaise with the Cheshire East Attendance & Children Out of School Service and next steps would be agreed.
5. Again, should attendance not improve, then the Cheshire East Attendance & Children Out of School Service would be contacted again for further advice and the possibility of a home visit to assess the situation further.

Rewards

Children are praised by staff for regular attendance, and those children who have achieved 100% attendance for the school year are presented with a certificate by the Headteacher on the last day of the school year during assembly, where the children are applauded by the whole School.

Attendance Targets

Our School maintains very high standards of attendance and punctuality and currently holds a 'green' status, requiring an annual visit by the Cheshire East Attendance & Children Out of School Service. Attendance is expected to be above 96% per year.

Conclusion

It is the aim of all at Black Firs to continually strive for improvement in all areas of education. This includes the key areas of attendance and punctuality that are vital to the raising of standards of attainment and the promotion of a positive and constructive attitude towards education. It is also an important issue in the maintenance and improvement of standards of discipline within the School.

It is a fact that if we can promote good habits of punctuality and regular attendance at primary school level then most children continue with these good habits at secondary school level.



Black Firs Primary School

Longdown Road, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 4QJ

Tel: 01260 272935 Fax: 01260 277285

Web site: <http://www.black-firs.co.uk>

email: mcasserley@black-firs.co.uk

office@black-firs.co.uk

pta@black-firs.co.uk

Dear Parent/Carer I would like to clarify the School's position regarding requests for leave of absence during term time. The School Governors have discussed this and feel that the large majority of parent's approach School attendance with due diligence.

This is reflected in the School's attendance rates, which place Black Firs in the top percentiles nationally. Whilst absence is not a major issue at Black Firs, Governors are required to make parents aware of the following guidelines and external rules set. These have been issued by Department for Education, Cheshire East and Governors will have to abide by them. We would ask that parents clearly articulate, on the application form overleaf, the *exceptional circumstances* that requires a leave of absence during term-time for School to be able to sanction any time-off.

Term Time Holiday

The amendments made to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that Headteachers *may not* grant any leave of absence during term time *unless there are exceptional circumstances*, and remove references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school sessions.

Reporting Absence

Schools must report to the local authority any child who has had at least 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a given period (one term or two consecutive half terms); educational welfare officers check school registers regularly to confirm compliance.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Headteachers can make the decision to ask the local authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to those parents who take their children on an unauthorised leave of absence (holiday) in term time. The register code in this instance would be G. The local authority will also issue Fixed Penalty Notices for absence that they consider is related to unauthorised absences. The register code in this instance would be O.

Payment of Penalty Notices

Changes to payment deadlines:

£60 if paid within 21 days (previously 28 days) rising to £120 if paid within 28 days (previously 42 days); failure to make payment will result in the local authority taking legal action for failure to ensure regular attendance at school under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996.

As parents/carers, you must consider the above consequences before submitting a Leave of Absence form to the School office (on the following page) and your signature on this form indicates that you have read and understood these conditions set out above.

Yours sincerely,

M. Casserley,
Headteacher.

The following section is to be completed by the School Office and returned to parents once a decision has been made on the request

To the parents/guardian of:

in Year:

Permission is / is not granted for authorised leave of absence on the following dates:

Signed:

(Chairman of Governors / on behalf of Chairman of Governors)



Black Firs Primary School

To the Chairman of Governors

Request for Leave of Absence

Please complete a separate form for each child and return to the School Office *no less* than **one calendar month** before the start of the absence requested.

Insufficient notice may result in the Leave of Absence being automatically unauthorised & the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices

Child's Name:			
in Year:		be granted leave of absence	
From:		To:	
	<i>(First day of school absence i.e. Mon - Fri)</i>		<i>(Last school day that will be missed)</i>

Please detail below the *exceptional circumstances* that means leave cannot be taken in the normal school holiday:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

The consequences for parent(s)/carer(s) taking children on holiday in term time which are **not** authorised by the school MAY result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority. Please also consider very carefully the resulting effect that this absence could have on your child's education

I have read and understood all the conditions set out in the accompanying letter, to completing and handing in this form

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)

For office use only Dates of previous absences this academic year
Permission granted /not granted

Calculation Chart – Authorisation of Leave of Absence in Term time

The merits of each individual request should be evaluated by providing answers to ALL the following questions and scoring accordingly....

	Points Possible	Points allocated	Total
What stage of their education is the pupil in question at?	Children or young people of Compulsory school age in any year group = 3 points Children or young people of non-compulsory school age in any year group = 2 points		
What is the level of attendance of this particular pupil?*	70% to 80% = 4pts 80% to 85% = 3pts 85% to 93% = 2pts		
How close are they to a major exam or SATS assessment?	More than 16 wks = 1pt 8 – 16 weeks = 2pts 2 – 8 weeks = 3pts less than 2 weeks = 4pts Exam & SATs period 8pts		
How much holiday leave has already been authorised in current academic year? **	8 or more = 4pts 5 to 7 days = 3pts 2 to 4 days = 2pts 1 to 3 days = 1pts		
Any special mitigating circumstances/ aspects of the leave which can be classed as part of that children curriculum requirements (& work set to satisfy these) as below:	Subtract 2 points from total.		
Details of mitigation ...			

DELETE WHERE APPROPRIATE:- REQUEST APPROVED / REQUEST DENIED

N.B. Leave of Absence where the Total number of points exceeds 8 should not be authorised by the school.

The only variation to the above would be where there are, in the opinion of the Head Teacher 'exceptional circumstances.' (incl. family, religious and cultural considerations)

*Where the level of attendance is below 80% at the time of the request leave of absence should not be authorised as the Local Authority may well be in the process of prosecuting the parent(s)/carer(s).

** Where the leave already taken in the current academic year exceeds the DfE guideline "i.e. maximum of 10 days in any academic year", any further requests should not be authorised.

Consequences for parent(s)/carer(s) taking children on holiday in term time which are not authorised by the school MAY result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.