



Finchampstead C of E (Aided) Primary School

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it

Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Board of Governors
Last reviewed:	September 2026
Next review due by:	September 2027

Rationale

By law, parents are required to send their children to school. Our policy is underpinned by the following legislation:

The Education Act 1996

The Children Act 1989

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE statutory guidance)

Details can be found in the Wokingham Borough Council website and the DfE website

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote, manage and improve good attendance and reduce absence, including Persistent Absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- To recognise absence can indicate a safeguarding concern.
- Act early to address patterns of absence, working in strong partnership with families using real time attendance data.
- Promote the importance that parents perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- Ensure all pupils are punctual to their lessons.

Introduction

At Finchampstead C of E Aided Primary School, we believe it is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life experiences. The school will work in partnership with parents/carers, the school's governing board and Local Authority to ensure that pupils achieve maximum possible attendance, to raise standards and to promote punctuality of all our pupils.

Aims and Expectations

- To create a culture in which good attendance (96% or higher) is the norm.
- To maintain effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality are valued by our school.

Attendance Targets

- To keep the whole school attendance figure above 96%.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents	• Ensure your child arrives at school every day on time, physically and mentally prepared for the day. Arrival time between 8.40am – 8.50am. • Phone/email the school office by 9am on the first day of absence giving a clear reason for absence if your child is unable to attend. • Inform the school as soon as possible of any changes to the contact details so that they can be used during absence if needed.
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	• Not booking holidays during school time. • Take an active interest in your child's school career, attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings. • Work in partnership with school to remove barriers to attendance. • Avoid arranging medical and dental appointments during school hours as much as possible. • Communicate with the school, as early as possible, circumstances which may require absence or require support.
School	• Set a high aspiration for punctuality and attendance. • Take the register at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions and ensure they are accurate and up to date. • Inform the Headteacher of any absence concerns. • Handle confidential information sensitively. • Communicate effectively with all families regarding pupil attendance and wellbeing.
School Office Manager	• Ensure accurate recording and coding of the registers daily. • Implement sign in routines for entry to school via the office. • Notify the Headteacher for any late / register coding concerns. • Implement unexplained absence procedures, where necessary, by 9.30am.
Leadership and Management	• Offer a clear vision for attendance, which will be clearly visible to our school community. • Ensure that all staff and families understand that absence is a potential safeguarding risk and act accordingly through phone calls, home visits and, if necessary, referrals to Children's services. • Ensure all members of the school community understand the importance of attendance and its link to achievement and social and emotional development. • Monitor groups of children and individuals and maintain clear attendance plans where necessary. Look for trends in attendance within these groups to determine whether targeted actions are required. • Work with the Educational Welfare officer to track attendance. • Inform our Local Authority of any unauthorised absence over 5 days. • Meet with parents to agree a joint action plan to improve attendance when attendance falls below 90%. • Report a sickness return to the Local Authority for pupils unable to attend due to sickness of either 15 consecutive or cumulative school days within a school year. • Consider whether additional support from other external partners such as the Local Authority, Children and Young peoples' mental health services, GPs, school nursing services or other health services is required and implement this. • Where support is provided, work together to deliver to the child and family. This maybe through nurture, intervention, ECO club, Lego therapy or external support through alternative providers or Early help. • Implement the Attendance procedures. • If a child is Missing in Education – guidance will be followed by the Headteacher. • Governors will monitor attendance information provided by the Headteacher each term. A termly written report will be shared and discussed.

The Council has a statutory duty to promote and enforce regular school attendance, this duty being carried out, in the main, by Educational Welfare Officers. The Educational Welfare Officer will follow up unauthorised absence.

Procedures and Practice

		Action to be taken
School Day	Children arrive between 8.40am and 8.50am each morning.	Registers open at 8.50am and close at 9am. In the afternoon registers are taken at 1.10pm.

	School starts at 8.50am School finishes at 3.15pm	
Late Arrival	A child arriving after 8.50am must arrive via the school office where their name and the reason for lateness must be entered into the book.	Step 1 The school will always notify the parents when a pupil has arrived late more than 2 times in a half term with a phone call from our Attendance team. Calls can be made after a single late if deemed helpful by the Attendance team. Step 2 Persistent lates will be followed up with a parent meeting in school with our Attendance team. Step 3 A meeting will be held between the parents, Headteacher and outside agencies to address the issue.
Absence due to illness	Children who are too ill to attend school are encouraged to stay at home and recover. Guidance is followed to reduce the risk of illness being passed to others by adhering to length of absence information. Absence due to being too ill to attend school is allowed by law. Evidence will be sought as well as support from Wokingham for persistently/severely absent pupils.	Parents will notify the school office by 9am each morning of the day of absence by phone or using attendance@finchampstead.wokingham.sch.uk
Holidays in Term time	Changes in Legislation in 2013 states Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term times unless for exceptional circumstances. If there are exceptional circumstances behind the request, parents must seek advance permission for leave of absence from the school in writing using the appropriate form (Appendix 1). The school will consider every request individually and will respond in writing to parents within 10 school days of receiving the request. If a request is not approved but the leave is still taken, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.	In exceptional circumstances parents submit a request form to the Headteacher seeking permission in advance. The school will consider the request against the criteria of “exceptional circumstances” and reply within 10 school days.
Unauthorised absence	The school has a legal obligation to report persistent absences to the Educational Welfare Officer, who may follow up individual cases by either letter or home visits in order to ensure the fullest possible attendance for the child concerned. Unauthorised leave of absence in term time can have serious legal consequences for parents. A parent of a child registered at a school has a legal duty to ensure the child’s regular attendance. Failure to fulfil this duty could result in a penalty notice or prosecution.	The school will report unauthorised absence to the Local Authority. At the time of writing the penalty notices are: ⊠ First penalty notice: £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Second penalty notice within 3 years: £160 payable within 28 days. ⊠ Third offence within 3 years: prosecution or another appropriate legal intervention rather than a further penalty notice.
Persistent Absence	The local Authority classify this as when the attendance drops below 90%.	Step 1 Phone call from the Attendance team. Step 2 Meeting with the Attendance team.

Severe Absence (SA):	The local Authority classify this as when the attendance drops below 50%.	Step 3 Meeting with Head Teacher and outside agencies with targets set and review dates in place.
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Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Governors to reflect changes in school procedures and alterations to the legal framework.

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