



# Attendance Policy 2022

## 1). INTRODUCTION

At the Fenland Federation of Marshchapel and Grainthorpe Schools, we strive to instil a love of learning through empowering all with the knowledge and skills to encourage them to be independent life-long learners, widening horizons and providing opportunities for all, irrespective of their different starting points. Excellent attendance at school is imperative to achieving this vision and for children to make good progress.

a) Government Expectations:

i) Schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- act early to address patterns of absence

ii) Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

iii) All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

b) This policy has been written in accordance with current legislation:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4) &(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 revised 2018

c) The Fenland Federation of Marshchapel and Grainthorpe Schools constantly monitors and evaluates the progress each of our pupils make. The schools work in partnership with pupils, parents and outside agencies to support all families and ensure pupils make progress with their education. We recognise that pupils who are absent will miss important educational opportunities which will affect their progress.

## 2). AIMS

The Fenland Federation of Marshchapel and Grainthorpe Schools:

a) Seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for achieving their potential

b) Aims for attendance to be 96% as a minimum expectation for all children

c) Strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, so that each member of our community feels safe and valued

d) Requires staff to work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends regularly and punctually

e) Will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate external agencies to provide information, advice, and support. Support offered to families may include informal work with our Pastoral Lead, an Early Help Assessment (EHA), or a Team Around the Child meeting (TAC).

f) Will challenge those parents and pupils who give low priority to attendance and punctuality

g) Will work with other agencies and professional bodies as appropriate to support parents, including, but not restricted to, Education Welfare Officers, Educational Psychologists, Children's Services, Pupil Re-Integration Team, Healthy Minds School Refusal Pathway.

### **3.EXPECTATIONS:**

a) Securing a high level of attendance requires parents and guardians to work closely with the school. It is essential parents and guardians:

- Ensure their child arrives on time for school. Gates open at 8:30am for an 8:45am start at Grainthorpe and doors open at Marshchapel at 8:45am for a 9:00am start.
- Notify the school before 8:45am on the first day their child is absent and every following day of absence, including an estimation of the likely length of absence wherever possible.
- Contact the school at an early stage about any attendance concerns.
- Recognise the school will be concerned when any child fails to meet the attendance target and work with us to improve their child's attendance.

b) If parents request leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances, this request must be made in advance on the form available from the office. Parents can request a meeting as well.

### **4. SCHOOL ORGANISATION**

For the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition, there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff.

#### **Governors:**

- May be given a specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies.
- Play a valuable role through representation at school attendance panels, parents evenings etc.
- Request regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings.

#### **Headteacher to:**

- Oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- Regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils, and parents.
- Set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- Liaise with the EWO.
- Monitor pupil attendance (less than 90% on a weekly basis and all pupils' attendance on a half termly basis).
- Respond to concerns raised by staff.
- Initiate phone calls to parents and arrange School Attendance Panel meetings.
- Ensure staff are kept up to date with the latest DFE Attendance guidance as set out in the publication 'School Attendance'.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/907535/School\\_attendance\\_guidance\\_for\\_2020\\_to\\_2021\\_academic\\_year.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907535/School_attendance_guidance_for_2020_to_2021_academic_year.pdf)

#### **Class Teacher to:**

- Complete registers accurately (indicating all authorised/unauthorised absence) and on time. Registers close at Grainthorpe at 9:00am and at Marshchapel at 9:15am
- Challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence and inform the Headteacher/DSL immediately of any serious concerns.
- Keep all evidence of absence on the register system and pass any written evidence/messages to the office to be filed in the child's personal file.

#### **Administration Staff to:**

- Input attendance data onto the Integris system using the correct codes as recommended by the DFE in their publication '**School Attendance**'.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance)

- Produce updates from weekly registers and weekly percentage information for the

Headteacher.

- Keep all evidence of absence on the register system and place written evidence in the child's personal file.
- Follow up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents or guardians. Staff will ring if the pupil has not arrived by 9:15am, after the register has been completed.
- Challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence and inform the Headteacher/DSL immediately of any serious concerns.
- Inform the Headteacher if there is no response to attempted contact.
- Send letters out to request unknown reasons for absence are provided.
- Send out letters to parents or guardians at the request of the Head Teacher.

#### **5. ADMINISTRATION: 'SCHOOL ATTENDANCE'.**

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance)

Schools must ensure the policy complies with the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) and the Human Rights Act (1998). This means providing information that is accessible and can be understood by parents, including translation and interpretation. This is particularly important for parents new to the country who may not be aware of the importance of school attendance and of the law relating to school attendance. Lack of knowledge or understanding may result in lower school attendance rates for some ethnic groups. Schools should analyse their data, and that provided by the Local Authority, to determine whether particular groups may be disadvantaged and require specifically targeted support.

#### **6). SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES**

##### a) Registration

- Morning registration is at 8:45am to 9:00am at Grainthorpe and 9:00am to 9:15am at Marshchapel. A child arriving after this time will be marked as late (attendance code L, please see appendix 1). Parents or guardians will be asked to sign in their children at the office after this point, giving reasons for lateness.
- Afternoon registration is at 1pm at both schools.

##### b). Recording attendance

- An accurate attendance register provides a solid foundation for analysis of absence and supports any statutory interventions that may be required.
  - It is important that the data entered is accurate and there is a mark for every pupil. Every pupil must fall into one of three categories of present, absent or late. We all have a duty of care and responsibility for safeguarding pupils; therefore, it is vital that the information is accurate.
  - The office staff are responsible for maintaining the system of recording accurate reasons for non-attendance. They ensure a rigorous system of liaising with parents takes place to ensure the correct codes are used to record authorised or unauthorised absences. All reasons for absence are recorded on the Management Information System and overseen by the Senior Administrator. The Headteacher is directly accountable to the Governing Body for the attendance at the schools.
  - Pupils leaving the schools during the day must be collected by an adult and signed out at the reception. This includes lunchtimes.
- Persistent lateness will be addressed by the Headteacher contacting the parent or guardian to discuss concerns.

##### c). Unexplained Absence

###### i) First Day of Absence

- If the School has not been notified about a reason for non-attendance, we will telephone

parents or guardians as soon as possible.

- If the parents or guardians do not respond to the call, all contacts on the child's record will be contacted if necessary and messages will be left. The Management Information System (Integris) will be completed.

ii) Second day of Absence

- If the school has not been notified about a reason for an absence for a second day, school will continue to attempt to contact all those named on the child's contact list. If we are unable to ascertain a reason for the absence, school will conduct a welfare check (this will be conducted by the headteacher).

iii) Fifth Day of Unexplained Absence

- If we have not heard from parents/guardians by the fifth day and the headteacher visit was not responded to, an email will be sent and we may contact Lincolnshire Police to undertake a welfare check.

iv) Tenth Day of Unexplained Absence

- Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority through the **Children Missing in Education** reporting process. We will also continue to liaise with the school's appointed Education Welfare Officer and Pastoral Leader.

d) Unauthorised and Authorised Absence

- Unauthorised Absence - This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes Children at Risk of Missing Education and new pupils who have not arrived in school on the agreed admission date. These pupils are pursued through the school's procedures.

- Authorised Absence - This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996. An authorised absence requires communication from the parent/guardian. Any pupil whose parent does not provide a reason for absence will be deemed to have been absent without a proven reason and the absence recorded as unauthorised. Absences are only allowed for specific reasons. These reasons include the child being ill, having an unavoidable medical or dental appointment, taking part in a religious event or require absence due to exceptional circumstances. \*

*\* Exceptional circumstances. School Attendance statutory guidance and departmental advice, September 2018 stipulates that: Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.*

e) Holidays during term time

Family holidays during term time cannot be authorised. Only exceptional circumstances will be considered. Appendix 7

f) Requests for Absence

- Each request for absence is considered separately. As the Headteacher is required to consider each request as unique, any individual decision cannot be directly compared with decisions made by the school in the past, and nor does it set a precedent.

- Any request for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be received well in advance using a relevant absence form which can be obtained from the school office.

- The Request for Absence form will be passed to the Headteacher for consideration. You will be notified in writing via email/letter if the request has been authorised or not within 5 working days of the request.

- **The Governing Body has decided that the decision of the Headteacher is final.** Parents or guardians can make a complaint to the Governing Body if they feel their request has not been dealt with fairly. Parents should request a copy of the Complaints Policy for more information.

g) Medical Absence

The school recognises that a small number of pupils may be absent due to medical conditions. The school will work with parents and guardians to enable pupils to attend school. This may include an individual care plan, advice from external agencies and transition arrangements. Please ensure you contact the school as soon as you are aware that a child is too ill to attend and continue to keep us updated.

h) Absence below 95%

The school monitors attendance daily. The following procedures and actions will be adhered to depending on the level of absence.

| Attendance (Year to Date) | Rating   | Possible Courses of Action  |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| 96% or greater Attendance | Green Satisfactory to Good   | Continued monitoring  |
| 90-95%                    | Amber Cause for Concern  | -Letter of concern Amber<br>- If no improvement (weekly monitoring), Invited to meet with the Headteacher or discussed as part of TAC<br>-Involvement of Education  |
| Below 90%                 | Red Children with attendance below 90% are considered to be persistent absentees | -Letter of concern Red<br>-Invited to meet with the Headteacher<br>-School Attendance Plan with Headteacher or as part of TAC<br>-Involvement of Education Welfare Officer<br>-Persistent Absence Formal warning notice letter if weekly monitoring shows no improvement<br>-Persistent Absence Final warning letter if no improvement as part of monitoring and plan- fixed penalty notice issued through LCC application. |

A Pupil Attendance Report is shared with parents and guardians six times a year (Appendix 2).

## **7. Use of Data**

a) The efficient and speedy collection of data is essential to the development of effective strategies for action. At the Fenland Federation of Marshchapel and Grainthorpe Schools, we use attendance data to monitor:

- Individual absence and lateness.
- Patterns of lateness and absence and the identification of trends by: Year groups, seasonal patterns, patterns, and nature of unauthorised absence.
- Vulnerable groups e.g. SEND, EAL, and Disadvantaged Pupils.

b) All staff members need to be alert to changes in attendance patterns and raise any concerns with the Headteacher.

## **8. Procedure for Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)**

a) Penalty Notices will only be issued within the terms of the Code of Conduct. Lincolnshire County Council is responsible for the administration and issue of penalty notices in Lincolnshire. The Local Authority will ensure that penalty notices are properly issued and will only issue them for offences where the Local Authority is satisfied that the matter meets the threshold for a prosecution. Further information including copies of the code of conduct can be found on Lincolnshire County Council's website, <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/welfare>

When requesting a FPN it is important to include the details of those parents or guardians who have day-to-day care of the child (meaning those who reside with the child). Equally it is important that warning letters go separately to each parent, this is so that if the case does go to prosecution we can clearly evidence that both parents have been clearly informed (templates of these letters are available from the Inclusion & Attendance Team).

b) The use of Fixed Penalty Notices:

- Regulations allow both the Local Authority and schools to issue fixed penalty notices. Payment is always made to the Local Authority.
- Fixed penalties are only one of the tools available to the Local Authority in tackling school attendance and anti-social behaviour issues and, where thought appropriate, alternative approaches such as Education Supervision Orders and prosecution may be utilised at the discretion of the Local Authority.
- If a penalty notice is issued, whether paid or not, it may be used in evidence in subsequent criminal proceedings in relation to either non-school attendance or being in a public place during school hours whilst excluded from school.

c) Fixed term penalties will only be issued in circumstances where the Local Authority is satisfied that the criteria for prosecution would be met if the option of a fixed penalty notice is not taken up by the parent or guardian. The circumstances in which a notice may be issued are:

- Where a child is absent from school due to unauthorised absence of 15% or above over a six-week period.
- Where a child is present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of any exclusion.

d) There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice and a parent can either accept and pay the same or decline payment subject to them being aware that further action as set out below may be taken by the Local Authority if the penalty notice remains unpaid.

However, the Local Authority has the discretion to withdraw the notice if they are satisfied that:

- The fixed penalty notice has been sent to the wrong person.
- It contains a material error (in these circumstances a fresh amended penalty notice could still be issued).
- If for any other reason the Local Authority are of the opinion that it should not have been issued.

### **9) Elective Home Education (EHE)**

a) As soon as a school is informed that a child is to be withdrawn to be electively home educated they need to phone 01522 782111 and liaise with the EHE Co-ordinator.

b) Schools are reminded that a child should not be assumed to be electively home educated until a letter has been received from the parents informing them of this decision. This letter must be sent to the Inclusion and Attendance team via [EHE@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:EHE@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

c) Schools should ensure that parents/guardians are fully aware of their responsibilities to home educate their child if they choose this route.

## ABSENCE AND ATTENDANCE CODES – APPENDIX 1

|   |  |
|---|--|
| / | Present at registration  |
| B | Educated off-site (not dual registration)  |
| C | Other approved educational activity (not covered by other codes and descriptions).   |
| D | Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)   |
| E | Excluded but no alternative provision made   |
| F | Agreed extended family holiday   |
| G | Family holiday (not agreed or sessions more than agreed)   |
| H | Agreed family holiday  |
| I | Illness  |
| J | Interview  |
| L | Late but arrived before the register closed  |
| M | medical or dental appointment  |
| N | No reason for the absence provided yet   |
| O | Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)  |
| P | Approved sporting activity   |
| R | Day set aside exclusively for religious observance   |
| S | Study leave  |
| T | Traveller absence  |
| U | Late and arrived after the register closed   |
| V | Educational visit or trip  |
| W | Work experience (not work based training)  |
| X | pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (Covid19)' and also for non-compulsory school age pupils |
| Y | Partial and forced closure   |
| Z | Pupil not on roll yet  |

**ATTENDANCE REPORT TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS (Each Term) – APPENDIX 2**

Name: <KnownName> <Surname>

Class:<Class>

| LEVEL         | Percentages are based on <u>190</u> school days in an academic year.  |
|---------------|---|
| <b>GOLD</b>   | <p><b>Your child's attendance is 98.5% or higher</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having less than 4 day's absence <u>in a whole academic year</u>. As well as being an excellent attender, your child has every chance of achieving to their best ability.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>SILVER</b> | <p><b>Your child's attendance is between 96% -98.4%</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is less than 10 days' absence <u>over the whole academic year</u>. Your child has the potential to achieve to their best ability.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>BRONZE</b> | <p><b>Your child's attendance is between 90% - 95%</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potentially missing up to 20 school days <u>in a whole academic year</u>. School will continue to monitor your child's attendance. Further extended absence may make it difficult for your child to achieve their best.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>RED</b>    | <p><b>If your child's overall attendance is below 90%, it is classed as Persistent Absence.</b> Your child is potentially missing so much time from school that it will be very difficult for them to make up the learning they have lost. It is possible that continued absence at this level <u>over the school year</u> could result in legal proceedings and financial penalty.</p> |

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>&lt;FirstName&gt;'s attendance this term is:</b> | <b>&lt;percentAttendYTD&gt;</b> |
|---|---------------------------------|

| <b>ALWAYS ON TIME!</b>                                  | <b>Sometimes a few minutes late</b>                  | <b>Often up to 10 minutes late</b>                        | <b>Frequently more than 10 minutes late</b>              |
|---|--|---|--|
| Well done! Always ready to start your learning on time. | Let's try to get to school on time <u>every</u> day! | Means up to 6.5 days of lesson time missed over the year. | Means up to 10 days of lesson time missed over the year. |

**ATTENDANCE ESCALATION PROCESS – APPENDIX 3**



#### Appendix 4 TEMPLATE LETTER for RED Attendance

##### **ATTENDANCE LETTER** (On Letterhead)

##### **NAME:**

Your child has achieved **less than 90% attendance** this term which is a cause for concern – your child is at risk of underachieving as a result. Your child's current attendance is . . %

We would ask for your support in ensuring that attendance improves over the coming weeks. Your child's attendance will now be monitored on a regular basis and we may invite you into school to discuss this further. It may be that these absences have been due to illness and we appreciate that COVID-19 restrictions and periods of isolation may have contributed to these absences, however, we feel you should be aware that future attendance needs to improve over the coming term.

If, following this letter, your child's attendance does not improve we will contact you again to discuss the situation further. It may be necessary to ask the Education Welfare Officer for assistance in this matter.

GOOD attendance is very important so that children are given as much opportunity as possible academically and socially. When children are absent from school they often find it difficult to catch up on the work they have missed and can feel unsettled.

We are asking for the support of all parents in improving attendance levels as we believe this is one of the main ways in which our children will be happy at school and achieve their full potential.

Appendix 5 Template Letter for FORMAL WARNING (Persistent Absence)

Ref:

Date:

Dear

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL: FORMAL WARNING

NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:

DATE OF BIRTH:

REGISTERED PUPIL AT:

I need to draw your attention to the fact that parents have a duty in law to ensure their child attends school regularly unless they are unable to do so by reason of ill-health or other legally acceptable reason.

During the period XXX, XX was absent from school on XX occasions out of a possible XX half-day sessions and no valid reasons have been provided. This is an unacceptable rate of attendance and I attach for your information, a copy of the Pupil Absence Record Sheet.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure their child receives suitable efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or education otherwise. Section 444 (1)(a) of the same Act states that where a parent of a child who knowingly and without reasonable justification fails to ensure regular attendance of a registered pupil at that school, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence against that Section. The Local Education Authority may, where necessary, institute legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under this section of the Education Act 1996 against those parents concerned. Alternatively, Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Education Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.

Please contact the school to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 6 Letter Template for FINAL WARNING (Persistent Absence)

Ref:

Dear

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL: FINAL WARNING TO PARENTS

NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:

DATE OF BIRTH:

REGISTERED PUPIL AT:

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly thereat, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence against that Section.

Take notice that the Local Education Authority considers that you have been guilty of a breach of the law in that you have failed, despite this matter having been previously brought to your attention, to send regularly and punctually to school in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act 1996. In view of this you have made yourself liable to be summoned before a Magistrates Court for each alleged offence.

This warning is issued in the hope that there may be no necessity to take further steps to enforce the law. However, you are warned that if you do not cause XX to attend school regularly, proceedings will be taken against you. You do not have to answer this letter and may well wish to seek the advice of a solicitor.

Yours sincerely



# Term Time Absence Request Form

Please complete this form and return to school before the period of absence. You will receive a signed copy of this form stating whether the absence has been authorised or not.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Permission is requested for the above child(ren) to take leave of absence from school

From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

A total of \_\_\_\_\_ school days.

The extenuating circumstances for this absence during term time is as follows:

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**Please note that without extenuating circumstances an absence cannot be authorised.**

I accept that The Fenland Federation cannot authorise any absence during term time unless there are extenuating circumstances and it can only be for up to 10 days in any school year. Any absences taken unauthorised may incur a fine.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Absence Authorised**

**Absence NOT Authorised**

Reason:

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Executive Headteacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 8 School Attendance Action Plan



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ACTION PLAN

|   |                      |                          |                               |          |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Name of Pupil   |                      |                          | Date of Meeting :             |          |
| Date of Birth:  |                      |                          | Venue:                        |          |
| Class / Year:   |                      |                          |                               |          |
| Med Evidence Req'd                                    | Yes / No             |                          | Attended by Parent /Guardian: | Yes / No |
| EWO referral  | Yes / No             |                          |                               |          |
| Current Attendance:<br>• Authorised<br>• Unauthorised | %<br>%<br>%          | Lates:<br>• L =<br>• U = | Attended by pupil?            | Yes / No |
| What's Working:                                       | What is Not Working: |                          | What needs to happen:         |          |
|   |                      |                          |                               |          |

Target: At Least 90% attendance by the end of the academic year.

Your child's attendance will be reviewed every term by the School Attendance Team and the Education Welfare Officer.

|                           |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Signed by:                |  |  |
| Parent / Guardian & Child |  |  |
| Headteacher               |  |  |
| Education Welfare Officer |  |  |
| Governor                  |  |  |
| Attendance Officer        |  |  |