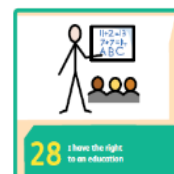




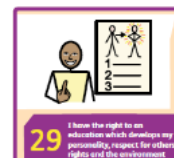
Attendance Policy

September 2022

Article 28-You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.



Article 29 - Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.



Key Contact Personnel in School

**Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy:
Sarah Costain**

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sarah Costain

Named Governor with lead responsibility: Shobha Ravindra

Date written: September 2017

Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body: 20th November 2018

Date reviewed: September 2019

Date reviewed: September 2020

Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body: 23rd November 2020

Date of next review: September 2021

Date reviewed: September 2021

Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body: March 2022

Date reviewed: September 2022

Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body: November 2022

Date of next review: September 2023

**This policy will be reviewed following any concerns and/or updates to
national and local guidance or procedures**

Statement of intent:

Five Acre Wood School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. This policy represents our commitment to expect 100% attendance from all our pupils, which is achieved by many children. It sets out our expectations and the strategies that Five Acre Wood School will undertake to achieve this.

In accordance with Department for Education (DfE) advice to schools, Five Acre Wood School will:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every child has access to full-time education.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

The Governors, Principal, Headteacher and school staff will work in partnership with parents and carers to achieve excellent attendance at Five Acre Wood School.

The term 'parent' includes all natural parents, any person who has parental responsibility and any person who has day to day care of the child.

Principles:

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement - it is a parent's/carer's legal responsibility to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development and is essential if children are to benefit fully from their school life.
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children while they are not in the care of their parents.
- All children whose attendance is irregular will be considered vulnerable.

Aims:

- To ensure that all children attend school regularly and punctually, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development. Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and attendance below 95%.
- To safeguard pupils to the best of the school's ability.
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff and Governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence. Any pupil with attendance below 90% is classed by the DfE as a Persistent

Absentee (PA). Schools are required to identify all PA pupils and report to the DfE at regular intervals during the academic year.

- To improve the life chances of the children attending school and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood. Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training.

Promoting Attendance:

Five Acre Wood School will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include support for families from TEAM, use of the contact book/daily communication with families, email and newsletters. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and children.

Five Acre Wood School will:

Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and know that their presence is valued.

Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality using newsletters and other forms of communications with parents making attendance a high priority.

Employ a key member of staff with responsibility for overseeing attendance. This will be Sarah Costain (Deputy Head) however day to day monitoring, improving and evaluating school attendance will be the responsibility of the Learning Approach Assistant Head teachers.

Follow a structured process for managing poor attendance. This may include writing to parents, inviting them to attend meetings and making arrangements in school to support their child to attend school more regularly.

Encourage our children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.

Celebrate good attendance by issuing rewards, stickers, certificates and other incentives.

Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored using our electronic registration system and that absences are followed up promptly.

Communicate effectively with other agencies (GPs, Kent County Council Integrated Children's Services, School Health etc) to support children with any issues there might be.

Meet the legal requirements for recording pupil absence using the correct registration procedures and codes with reference to authorised and unauthorised absence.

Have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence. It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all pupils are made to feel welcome and supported with the transition back into school. This may include a temporary reduced timetable. A back to school meeting will be held with parents and cares to devise a support plan.

Parental Responsibility:

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and sometimes puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know your child is safe and their whereabouts are known. Parents should regularly update the school during any period of absence from school and inform the school when their child is returning.

We expect parents to:

Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality, with their child aiming for 100% attendance each year.

Keep absences to a minimum.

Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.

Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address.

Telephone the School/Academy when their child is unable to attend on the first day of the absence and each day thereafter with the reason for this. Parents should also let the School/Academy know if their child is going to be late eg if a car breaks down or an urgent appointment has been made.

Provide a written explanation for the absence when their child returns to school.

Parents should provide medical evidence indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician, if asked to do so. Whenever possible all medical/dental appointments should be made outside of school hours unless an emergency has arisen.

Contact the school at the earliest opportunity if their child is experiencing any difficulties and the school will do everything possible to resolve the issues.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility under **Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act** and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school may create an offence in law.

We expect pupils to:

Attend every day unless they are too ill, or the absence has been authorised by the school.

Arrive at school on time.

The Role of School Staff:

At Five Acre Wood School there is a whole school approach to ensuring excellent school attendance with some staff having specific responsibilities.

Sarah Costain, Deputy Head/DSL has overall responsibility for school attendance.

Class teachers or form tutors will keep accurate registers, completing the register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance register twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers will mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies their Learning Approach Assistant Head, of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the Assistant Heads to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence – admin team will make contact
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)

TEAM will liaise with Assistant Heads to:

- Ensure parents are informed regularly of any concerns regarding their child's attendance
- Offer support to parents to improve attendance and punctuality concerns
- Signpost families to support services
- Refer families to support services

Lateness:

Pupils are expected to arrive by 9:15am. All pupils who arrive late must report, with their parent, to the school office where the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late in the register (registration code L).

The register will close at 10am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration and this will count as an unauthorised absence (registration code U).

Frequent lateness after the register has closed will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for further action.

Absence:

A child's absence will be authorised if approval has been given by the school in advance or an acceptable reason has been given afterwards.

Only the Principal, Peggy Murphy, can authorise absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified. If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. 'poorly' or 'unwell'
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (see 'leave of absence' above)

The Principal may authorise other absences in 'exceptional circumstances' but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Principal, acting on behalf of the Governing Body. Each case will be judged on its merits and the Principal's decision is final. The principles for defining 'exceptional' are: rare, significant, unavoidable and short. An absence might be considered unavoidable if the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Once a child has been absent without permission, the absence cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent 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's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that the Principal can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in statutory referral to the Local Authority. The school will follow the appropriate procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the pupil's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings will be attached to the completed referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include:

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Timeline of school action for low attendance:

- 95 - 100% attendance - class teacher to investigate and notify Learning Approach Assistant Heads of concerns
- 90 – 95% attendance – school interventions letters/meetings with parents
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.

- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

Safeguarding:

The school reserves the right to invite parents into school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns, i.e. female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, forced marriage, radicalisation. In addition if the school suspects that a pupil may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school the Designated Safeguarding Leads reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies, i.e. Children's Services, Early Help, and the Police. The school will inform parents/carers if a referral is to be made. However, this may not be appropriate in every circumstance depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern and a referral may be made without informing the parent/carer.

Children Missing Education:

Parents must inform the school/academy in writing if they are planning to remove their child from the school roll. This must include the details of the arrangements that will be put in place for the child's education.

The school will follow the Department for Education guidance relating to Children Missing Education (CME). If after ten day's continuous absence the school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, they will make a referral to the Local Authority.

Penalty Notices:

Five Acre Wood School may make use of Penalty Notices to address poor school attendance in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

A penalty notice can be issued as a result of the following:

- Parentally condoned absence
- Unauthorised leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term-time
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)
- Where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours during the first five days of exclusion.

A Penalty Notice may be issued when a pupil has been absent for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 school days – these absences do not need to be consecutive.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the local authority.

Five Acre Wood School asks that parents fully support this policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education.

Monitoring and review:

The policy is monitored at regular intervals by the Principal. The Principal reports to Governors about the effectiveness of the policy.

The attendance policy is on the school website and hard copies are available to parents and carers from the school office.

The policy is reviewed at least annually

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Late letter (Code L)**
- Appendix 2 Late letter (Code U)**
- Appendix 3 Absence Letter**
- Appendix 4 School Attendance Meeting Letter**
- Appendix 5 School Letter Warning re: Penalty Notice Referral**
- Appendix 6 Unauthorised absence confirmation of PN request**
- Appendix 7a Response to Leave Request (Not Authorising)**
- Appendix 7b Response to Leave Request submitted retrospectively (Not Authorising)**
- Appendix 8 Unauthorised leave confirmation of PN request**
- Appendix 9 School letter where they believe a holiday was taken**
- Appendix 10 Traveller Attendance letter**
- Appendix 11 Traveller Absence due to travelling**
- Appendix 12 School Referral Pathway**
- Appendix 13 Kent County Council – Educational Penalty Notices Code of Conduct**
- Appendix 14 Role of PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) staff**
- Appendix 15 Statutory Referrals (AS1)**
- Appendix 16 Top Tips for Parents & Carers about School Attendance**

Appendix 1

Dear «Name»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «Name» has been late to school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «Name» was late.

At Five Acre Wood School the register is taken at 09:15 am and at 13:15 pm.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse or TEAM staff, please do not hesitate to contact us. Should «Name»'s punctuality however continue to be a cause for concern I will need to inform the School Liaison Officer.

Yours sincerely,

Assistant Head Teacher

Appendix 2

Dear «Name»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «Name» has arrived after the register has been closed. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «Name» was late.

At Five Acre Wood School the register is taken at 09:15 am and is closed at 09:30 am for the morning session and taken again at 13:15 pm and closed at 13:30 pm for the afternoon session. Pupils that arrive after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

If «forename» continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely,

Assistant Head Teacher

Appendix 3

Dear «Name»

RE : «forename» «surname»

As you may be aware we are asked by the local authority to monitor pupil's attendance and absence. We understand that pupils can have periods of sickness and other circumstances beyond your control that affect their attendance. However, if a pupil's attendance falls below 90% we will contact parents. If you have concerns and would like help from the school please contact me on the school number shown above.

Our monitoring process shows that «forename» has been absent from school for a total of «total_authorized_absences» authorised sessions and «total_unauthorized_absences» unauthorised sessions. This means that «forename»'s attendance for the year is currently «percentage_attendance»%.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Head Teacher

Appendix 4

Dear (Name)

Re: (Pupil's Name)

Despite previous attempts to advise you, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement. (Pupil's name)'s attendance at school is currently (%). This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in (pupil's name)'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness will require medical evidence. If medical evidence is not provided, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for at It is imperative that you and attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by

.....

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me on 01622 743925 so that a mutually convenient time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and 's absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution..

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Head Teacher

Appendix 5

Dear Parent/Carer

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence

At our school we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that «forename» has been absent from school for a total of «total_unauthorised_absences» unauthorised half day sessions. I refer you to legislation regarding Penalty Notices.

'As from 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) during any 100 possible school sessions.'
A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

Please note this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

If further unauthorised absence occurs you will be contacted and invited in for a meeting at the school.

At Five Acre Wood School we consider attendance and these new legal powers very important, this is why we are bringing this to your attention.

Please ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Head Teacher

Appendix 6

Dear

Re (Child's Name)

With reference to our letter dated ??, «forename» has now reached a total of «total_unauthorised_absences» half day sessions of unauthorised absence. As a result we will now be requesting a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Head Teacher

Appendix 7a

Dear (Name)

Re: (Pupil's Name)

Request for leave during Term-Time For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»

I have received your request to take «forename» out of school for a family holiday between ??date and ??date, a total of ??Number of school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «forename» out of school I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Head Teacher

Appendix 7b

Dear (Name)

Re: (Pupil's Name)

Request for leave during Term-Time
For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively and I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Head Teacher

Appendix 8

Dear

Name: «forename» «surname» DOB: «date_of_birth»

With reference to our letter dated **??date**, the leave of absence taken between **??date** and **??date** has now been recorded as Unauthorised Absence and as a result a Penalty Notice has been requested.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Head Teacher

Appendix 9

Dear (Name)

Re «forename» «surname»

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence, except in exceptional circumstances. ***(State why you are treating this absence as a family holiday and/or why there are no exceptional circumstances)***

Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively therefore this absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence, where a child has 10 unauthorised sessions within 100 school session a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty instead of being prosecuted for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The amount of the penalty is £120 per parent, per child, but if payment is made by you within 21 days of receipt of this Notice it will be £60 per parent, per child. If you pay this penalty within the time limits, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence, i.e. your liability for the offence will be discharged.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Head Teacher

Appendix 10

Dear (Name)

Re: (Pupil's Name)

Traveller Absence

«forename» «surname»

I am writing to say how concerned I am over the number of times «forename» has been absent from school. This academic year «forename» has missed «total_authorized_absences» authorised half day sessions and «total_unauthorised_absences» unauthorised half day sessions achieving an overall attendance rate of «percentage_attendance»%.

Traveller children have to attend school for 380 sessions (190 days) each year, which is the same for all children and you are at risk of being referred to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer if «forename»'s attendance falls below 90%. I am unable to authorise any absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances or if you will be travelling for occupational purposes and agree this with the school in advance.

If you would like to speak to me about «forename»'s attendance, please telephone the school to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Head Teacher

Appendix 11

Dear (Name)

Traveller Absence

«forename» «surname»

Thank you for contacting me to say that «forename» will be absent from school from **??Date** as you will be travelling due to your work.

The law allows me to authorise «forename»'s absence if your trade or business means that you have to travel from place to place. However, you have not let me know when «forename» is likely to return to school. Unless you contact me during the next 10 school days to confirm a date, I will refer «forename» to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education.

After 20 days absence, there may be grounds to take «forename»'s name off the school roll and you will have to re-apply for a school place when you return.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Head Teacher

Appendix 12

Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

