Attendance Policy April 2024

Document title			Attendance Policy
Status of policy			Statutory/non-statutory guidance
Author (name & role title)			Sandra Scott - Headteacher
Version number			V1
Date approved			June 2024
Approved by			Board of Governors
Date of review			June 2026
Document history			
Version	**Date**	**Author**	**Note of revisions**
V1	10/06/2024	Sandra Scott	

Foundations for LIFE School is owned and operated by Omega Life Education Ltd part of the Omega Life Group.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its pupils and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. It should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding, and child protection.

All these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core value of building confidence and preparing pupils for life.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Foundations for LIFE School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not.

- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a stepparent, guardian or other relative.
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person.
- A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The term 'carer' is also used to include the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula HR
- Compliance Health and Safety
- U-Check
- The Safeguarding Company (online CPD)
- Markel Care (Insurance)
- B11 Education Consultancy
- KCFM (Facilities Management)

Foundations for LIFE School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Foundations for LIFE School.

The policy documents of Foundations for LIFE School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although circulated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

Contents

Section	Item	Page
1	Introduction	4
2	Aims	4
3	Legislation and guidance	4
4	Roles and responsibilities	5
5	Recording attendance	6
6	Authorised and unauthorised absence	9
7	Strategies for promoting attendance	10
8	Attendance monitoring	10
9	Policy Review	11
10	Links with other policies	11
	Appendix A	12
	Appendix B	14

1. Introduction

Every child in Foundations for Life School is welcomed, valued and respected and also encouraged to respect themselves and others. Our aim is to empower all children to gain the essential skills both academic and social that will equip them for life.

As part of Omega Life Education Foundations for Life School believes that education is essential for all and for children to achieve their full potential regular attendance and punctuality is required. Non-attendance for any reason is an important issue that is treated promptly and seriously. In all cases of non-attendance it is essential that early action is taken.

The Governing Board, Headteacher and school staff of Foundations for Life School acknowledge that there is a strong correlation between high attendance and pupil progress. Foundations for Life School adheres to the Dept. of Education Guidance Working together to improve school attendance and applies the recommendations relating to using pupil registers and attendance codes.

Every child in Foundations for Life School is welcomed, valued and respected and also encouraged to respect themselves and others. Our aim is to empower all children to gain the essential skills both academic and social that will equip them for life. Foundations for Life School recognises that attendance at school is essential for a pupil 's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement.

Pupils can arrive with previous poor attendance levels or even school refusal, due to their SEMH difficulties. It is our aim to ensure that their attendance improves as soon as they are able, and we deploy a range of strategies to help them and their families manage this and improve resilience to attend school.

2. Aims

The aim of this policy is to promote the 'most effective education for pupil s at Foundations for Life School. In order to achieve this, it is vital that pupil s attend school consistently and punctually. In order that pupils and parents/carers cooperate with this policy and pupils gain their full entitlement to education, parents will be informed of the requirements on attendance at Foundations for Life School.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- To promote good attendance, remove barriers and reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- To ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled, regardless of age, aptitude, ability or SEND.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupilts have the support in place to attend school
- To communicate all expectations relating to attendance and punctuality effectively to all stakeholders affected by them.

3. Legislation and Guidance:

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. It is drawn from relevant legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance, including:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the schools with the use and implementation of policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole group
- Making sure the schools are providing staff with adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for thei mplementation of this policy

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance or the attendance officer (if not the Headteacher)

The designated senior leader / attendance officer is responsible for:

- leading actions to optimise attendance across the school, including:
- benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement and offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the /principal headteacher
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- having an oversight of data analysis/monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- working with outside agencies such as education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Helen Webster, Assistant Headteacher who can be contacted via email Helen@foundationsforlifeschool.co.uk

Class teachers and other responsible staff members

Class teachers / form tutors / other responsible staff members are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. See **Appendix B** for further information.

School admin staff

School admin staff:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Attendance Officer/Assistant Head teacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends everyday on time and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than1emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Contact the school promptly and seek help, whenever any problem occurs that impacts on their child's school attendance.
- Work with us to remove any barriers to attendance.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day on time attend every time tabled session on time. Talk to someone they trust at school if they have any problems that impact on their school attendance.

Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility in school and we therefore expect that school staff will follow the tabled guidance seen in **Appendix B**.

5. Recording Attendance

Attendance register

Foundations for Life School keeps an attendance register, and places all pupil s onto this register.

Foundations for Life School takes the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day (AM) and once during the second session (PM).

It records whether every pupil is:

Present; attending an approved off-site educational activity
Absent; unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register includes:

- the original entry
- the amended entry
- the reason for the amendment
- the date on which the amendment was made
- the name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix A for the Dept of Education attendance codes.

The school also records:

For all pupils whether the absence is authorised or not the nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity the nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school keeps every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Pupils must arrive in school by 9 am on each school day.

The register for the first session is taken at 9 am and is kept open until 9:20 am. The register for the second session is taken at 12:55pm and is kept open until 13:15 pm.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff (see also section 7).

Parents/Carers can leave messages prior to office hours (after 16:00 or before 8:30) by leaving a message on the school's answerphone.

Foundations for Life School marks absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school asks for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The school does not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence is recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers are notified of this.

Planned absence.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as one of the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents must complete an Absence Request form which can be either requested via email or found on the school website.

However, the school encourages parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:
before the register has closed will be marked asl ate using the appropriate code after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school:

- calls the pupil's parent/carer by morning breaktime of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police.
- Identifies whether the absence is approved or not
- Identifies the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained–this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Calls the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will call the child's parent/carer if they are ot in school and they haven't received regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via annual reviews, parent evenings, a mid-year report and a full end of year report. Parents can also view pupil attendance via the Arbor app.

6. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or requested via email. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see section 4 for more detail)

religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh travellers, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

- Agreed alternative education
- medical/dental appointments that can not take place out of school hour
- illness–with written parental/carer consent or medical note.
- Attending a family funeral (this must not, however, exceed an agreed period of absence)

Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Penalty notices can be issued by a local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- the number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

7. Strategies for promoting attendance/Attendance Monitoring

Attendance %	Level of Concern	Action by the school
95% and above	None – on track attendance	• Letters of recognition • Term on term recognition postcards • Annual Attendance awards
90-95%	Concern as below school target	• ●Monitoring and support over a short period of time by school to see if improvement occurs as part of low attendance review meetings each half term. • Further tutor check ins during arrival and departure times to monitor concerns/anxieties/issues for pupils and resolve barriers to future non-attendance
Below 90% initial	Frequent absence	• Contact with family/carers to offer further support • Medical evidence required for all absences • Meeting with parents to discuss concerns and provide practical strategies to support in the home. • Action plan which may include support from other school services such as pastoral/well-being team.
Below 90% next steps	Continued persistent absence	• Contact with family and letter home to remind parents of legal responsibility. • Further meeting with parents • Update action plan • Involve EWO/Case Officer or other external agencies • Possible safeguarding referral

8. Attendance Monitoring

School monitoring of attendance

The school:

- monitors attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- identifies whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences maybe a cause for concern.

The school compares attendance data to the national average, and shares this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school:

- analyses attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupil s or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and uses this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupil s and their families.
- looks at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and develops strategies to address these patterns.

Using data to improve attendance.

The school:

- provides regular attendance reports to Class Teachers and Assistant Headteachers and other school staff to facilitate discussions with pupils, families and carers.
- uses data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.
- may place a pupil on a support plan to address the barriers to attendance

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school:

- Uses attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Holds regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provides access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- May place a pupil on a support plan to address the barriers to attendance.

9. Policy review

This policy is reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Sandra Scott, Headteacher. At every review, the policy is approved by the governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy also links to Foundations for Life School policies:

Foundations for Life School Behaviour Policy
Foundations for Life School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Foundations for Life School Mental Health and Well-being Policy
Foundations for Life School Admissions Policy

Appendix A Attendance codes

Mark	Description	Example	Attendance category
/	Present (AM)	The pupil is present at morning registration.	Present
\	Present (PM)	The pupil is present at afternoon registration.	Present
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Inset	Not counted in attendance
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school.	Educational Activity
C	Authorised Absence	Leave of absence granted by the school. Only exceptional circumstances warrant granting a leave of absence.	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registration	The pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered.	Educational Activity
E	Exclusion	Where no alternative provision is made.	Authorised Absence
G	Unauthorised holiday	The pupil is on holiday, where the school has not granted authorisation.	Unauthorised Absence
H	Authorised holiday	The pupil is on holiday that has been granted as authorised by the school, only exceptional circumstances warrant granting a leave of absence.	Authorised Absence
I	Illness	The pupil is unwell. Not medical or dental appointments.	Authorised Absence
J	Interview	The pupil is at an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment	Authorised Absence
L	Late before register closed - do not use until pupil has arrived	The pupil arrives late before register has closed.	Present
M	Medical/dental appointment	The pupil has a medical or dental appointment, evidence should be provided by the parent/carer.	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided - use this code if unsure about which code to use	The reason of absence has not yet been provided. This code should be changed once the reason has been provided.	Unauthorised Absence
O	Unauthorised absence	If by the end of the registration period, a reason for absence has not been issued.	Unauthorised Absence

P	Approved sporting activity	The pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school.	Educational Activity
Q	Other planned authorised onsite meeting or activity	Authorised onsite meeting/activity, e.g. annual review, transition planning, exam	Present
R	Religious observance	Schools must record absence as authorised when it falls on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the parents/carers' religious body	Authorised Absence

S	Study Leave	Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete, it should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. If schools do decide to grant study leave, provision must still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller absence	A number of different groups are covered by the generic term traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Travellers, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. This code should not be used for general absences by those groups. It must only be used when the pupil's parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes and the school has granted a leave of absence following a request from the parent. This code should not be used to record any other types of absence by these groups.	
U	Late after register has closed - 9.30am	The pupil arrives late after the register has closed.	
V	Educational visit	The pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school.	Educational Activity
W	Work Experience	The pupil is on a work experience placement.	Educational Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	eg where a pupil not of compulsory school age is attending school part-time.	Not counted in attendance
Y	Unable to attend due to	Where a pupil is unable to attend school because: • the school site or part of it, is closed due to an	Not counted in attendance

	exceptional circumstances	unavoidable cause at a time when pupils are due to attend; or • the transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within safe walking distance; or • a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens, (for example the pupil's name is on the register but the pupil is not yet "on roll" and so is not attending school).	Not counted in attendance

Appendix B Attendance Tasks

Attendance Task	Lead responsibility
1. Ensure that school registers are completed at least twice daily and promptly.	All class teachers/tutors
2. Class teachers must complete the morning register by 9.15am. The admin team will print up to date registers for Fire and health and safety reasons.	All class teachers Admin team
3. Provide a welcoming atmosphere for all pupils so that they feel safe and ready to learn. Offer a sympathetic response to any pupil concerns and work together to resolve.	All school staff
4. Encourage high pupil attendance through assemblies, posters, awards, certificates, praise, and postcards home.	All school staff School attendance officer
5. Respond promptly and take action to a child or parents/carers concern about the school or other pupils	All school staff Senior Leadership Team Safeguarding Team
6. Monitor every pupil's attendance and notify senior leadership team of attendance statistics	School attendance officer
7. Contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence and ascertain the reason	School attendance officer
8. Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence, and ensure that any safeguarding action is taken where required	School attendance officer Safeguarding Team
9. Utilise statistical data on attendance to influence the school's response to behaviour, attendance and mental health and wellbeing.	Senior Leadership Team
10. Identify whether the absence is approved or not and ensure the correct code is used on the school management information system, Arbor, which is then used to download data to the school census.	School attendance officer
11. Inform parents/carers in writing of concerns about attendance, arrange meetings with them to discuss further and to liaise with external agencies to assist the improvement of school attendance for individual pupils	School attendance officer Senior Leadership Team Safeguarding Team
12. If a pupil fails to attend school on the agreed or notified date for the expected first day of attendance the school must establish the reason and mark the attendance register accordingly.	School attendance officer
13. Recognise improvement in attendance figures and communicate with pupils/parents/carers.	School attendance officer