The Ferncumbe
C of E Primary School

Attendance and Registration Policy

This policy was approved by the Governing Board and supersedes any previous Attendance and Registration Policy. The policy has been developed by the Head and SLT, incorporating advice from Warwickshire Attendance Service, and in consultation with Governors (including Parent Governors). It will be reviewed every 2 years or earlier if needed. Any amendments will require the approval of the Governing Board.

APPROVAL BODY	The Ferncumbe C of E Governing Board
APPROVAL DATE	Autumn 2023
REVIEW DATE	Autumn 2 2025
HT	Tracey Webb
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS	Donna Bothomley

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1. Aims

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

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- 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 pupils have the support in place to attend school

2. Legislation and guidance

2.1 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. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- 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 (Pupil 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 pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The lead governor on attendance is **Joanne Blake**

3.2 The Head teacher is responsible for:

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes and school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Ensure intervention reintegration plans are in place in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- make referrals to Warwickshire Attendance Service

The school Attendance Champion is **Heather Reid**

3.3 Class teachers (including supply or cover supervision) are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, onto the school's attendance system by the close of registration each morning and afternoon.

3.4 School admin staff will:

- Monitor the school attendance reporting system SIMS and enquire into reasons for absence where none has been given (N code).Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system and/or
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.5 Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school (either through the school's reporting system or a phone call) to report their child's absence before 9am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.6 Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 The school will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. The school will take the attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark 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 will include:

- 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 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- 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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day (see section 5).

4.2 The School will mark 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 will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

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

However, we encourage 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.

4.4 A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

4.5 Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning 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 take other reasonable steps:
    - Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
    - Possible home visit
    - Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
    - Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify 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
- Call 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

4.6 The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels at parents' evenings and through written reports.

5. Punctuality and Lateness

5.1 The school day starts at 8.45am for all year groups. Pupils who arrive after this time will be recorded as late to school (L code). The Registers close at 9.15 am [can't be longer than 30 minutes after school starts] and after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code). The Afternoon begins at 1pm for Reception and 1.15pm for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils who arrive after this will be recorded as late to school (L code) Registers close at 1.15pm and 1.30pm respectively. After this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code).

5.2 Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, Head teacher/Attendance Champion will contact the parents/carers via text or email about punctuality, including a copy of the child's registration certificate, and stating the total minutes late over a determined period.

5.3 If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school may make a formal referral to WAS

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence (Leave of Absence requests)

- The Head teacher 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 Head teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

- Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- 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 before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible from the school office. 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 sections 4.2 and 4.3 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 gypsies, 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
- Flexi-schooling requests – a copy of the flexi-schooling policy is available from the Headteacher.

6.2 Unauthorised term-time absence (including holiday requests)

- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council's Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. A copy of which can be found at https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

6.3 Penalty notices may also be issued taking the following into consideration:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

7. Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality

The School is committed to provide children with the 'tools' they need to confidently attend school. The school will support families through a number of strategies including:

- Sharing expectations and the importance of regular attendance with parents through newsletters, parent meetings and on the school website.
- The school is a welcoming environment where children feel valued and welcomed.
- Teachers plan the curriculum to build on children's prior learning through investigation and immersion. The curriculum design is linked to the school's vision, to enjoy, believe and achieve and to develop children's learning behaviours which enable them to become resilient, independent and confident learners.
- Teachers share the over view of the learning, highlighting what is coming up so children don't want to miss out.
- School staff will speak with parents to discuss the reasons behind non-attendance and or lateness. The school will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to support parents and children, for example, staggered drop-offs or alternative entrance where possible; transition objects to support the child with the transition between home and school.
- Offering parenting workshops (e.g. Warwickshire parenting support team workshops and programmes; the Solihull Approach; Family Thrive). These include sessions on routines and helpful ideas.
- Providing children with tasks or responsibilities to perform at the start of each day.
- Thrive and breakfast club provided to support children with transition and/or emotion based school anxiety
- Supporting families with the purchase of school uniform in different ways which includes school uniform sales and uniform 'swaps'. Parents should ask a member of staff if they need advice or support with purchasing school uniform.

8. Attendance

8.1 The school will:

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

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

8.4 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 will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Follow the flowchart in appendix 2.
- Hold 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
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Head teacher. Following the review, the policy will be approved by the local governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

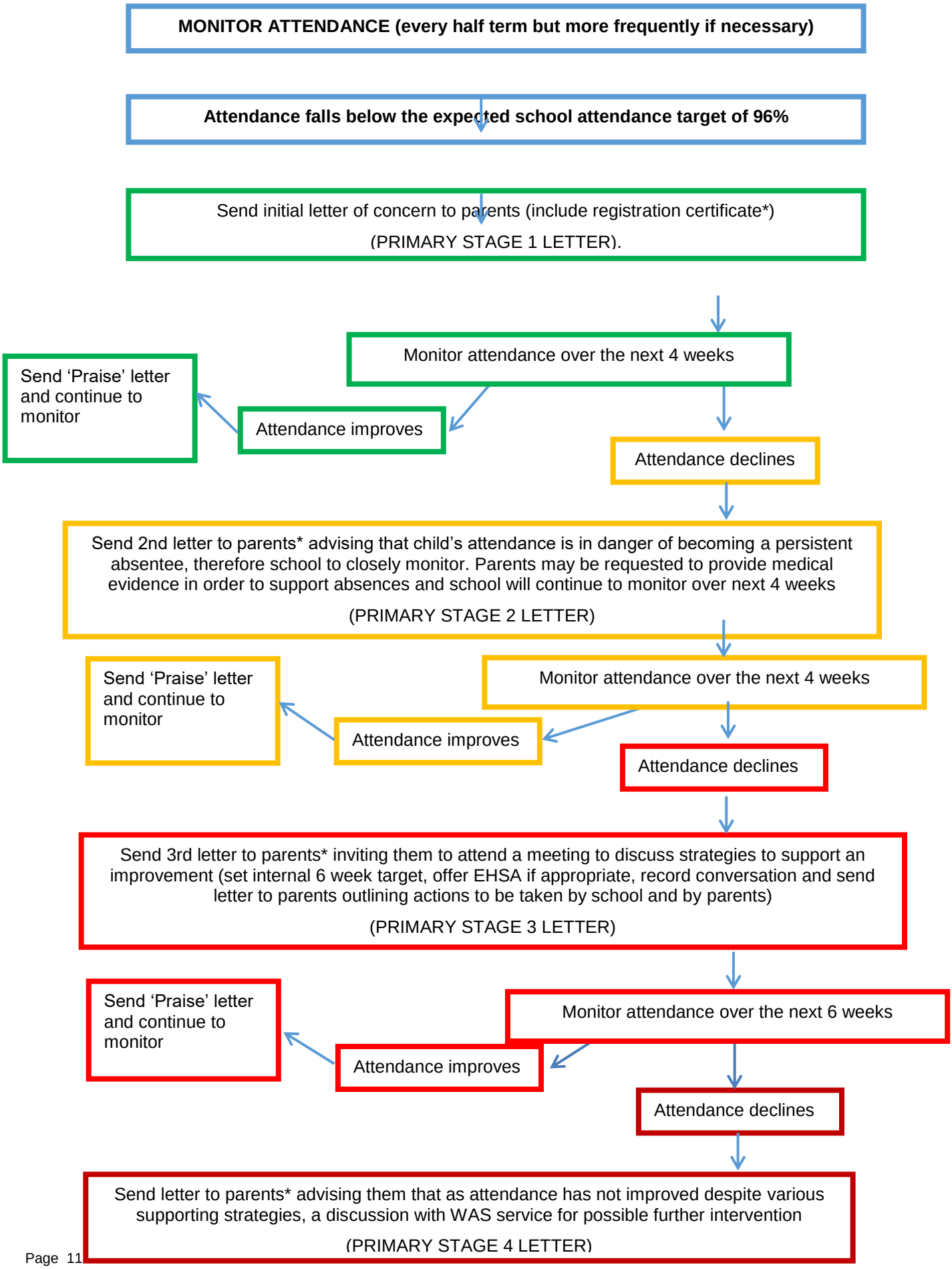
Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Flowchart for attendance monitoring (escalation process)