



3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

**Re: Pupil Attendance and Punctuality from 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

A warm welcome to our new families who have joined us this year and welcome back to our returning families. I sincerely hope that you have all had a restful summer with your families and friends. We are very much looking forward to the coming academic year.

Next week, staff are really looking forward to welcoming all our children back to Featherstone. I am writing to you now about attendance and punctuality so that you feel well informed.

Attendance and punctuality are taken very seriously at Featherstone Primary School especially after the COVID disruption of the last two years. Children with good levels of attendance and punctuality are much more likely to be happy and successful than those children who do not attend as regularly. Since March 2021, attendance has been compulsory and it continues to be so. This means that should you choose for your child to not attend school, or you chose to take them out of school for unauthorised leave, you may be liable for a penalty notice. Please see letter from Birmingham City Council's Legal Intervention Team, that has also been sent to you.

All children, from Reception to Year 6, has their attendance monitored. If your child's attendance falls below the expected level (96%) you can expect to receive communication from Mr. Douglas to invite you to a meeting to discuss how we can support you. To improve attendance, processes will be followed, which may include discussions around penalty notices in-line with the government guidelines and expectations. This is not something that we ever want to do so please work with school to ensure that your children are good attenders, who are on-time for school.

**Absence due to illness or medical reasons**

It is vital that if your child is not attending school, that you inform us of the reason immediately. You can do this by calling the school office on 0121 675 9740 (you have a choice to leave a message if you wish).

Due to the increased risks associated with the pandemic, it is crucial that if your child is unwell that you inform us of all the symptoms and are open and honest with us. A member of staff will be in contact with you if the reason for your child's absence is not clear from the message you have left or if we need to advise you to seek further medical advice. Absences due to repeated illness may become subject to required medical evidence and will only be authorised at school discretion.

If your child has a medical appointment please let us know in advance and provide an appointment card or letter to confirm when and where this appointment is taking place. Medical appointments with appropriate evidence will be authorised.

**Absence due to COVID-related symptoms**

The government guidance for self-isolation changed on 16<sup>th</sup> August. If your child has possible COVID-19 symptoms, your child **must not** attend school. You must inform us as soon as possible if your child has any COVID-19 symptoms. A PCR test from a COVID-19 test centre is advised for anyone with COVID-19 symptoms.



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If someone in your household has COVID-19 symptoms, or a confirmed case of COVID-19, but your child **does not have symptoms**, your child **can** attend school. A PCR test is advised to rule out if they may have COVID-19.

### **Leave in Term Time**

Now, more than ever, it will be even harder for us to authorise leave requests. There are very restrictive conditions for a Headteacher to authorise absences. Please see our [Attendance Policy](#) for more details.

It is vital that you inform us if you are intending on taking your child(ren) out of school for any reason. Please complete the leave request form available on our website or from the school office in plenty of time to allow us to complete all the necessary paper work. Unfortunately, the rescheduling of cancelled holidays or days out will not be an authorisable reason. Please be very mindful of the ever-changing travel advice regarding self-isolation upon return from certain travel destinations. This can change without warning and may change whilst you are abroad if you choose to go abroad. This means your child may have to miss school upon their return even if you travel during the school holidays.

Can I remind parents that leave in term time will result in penalty notices being issued if the criteria are met. Children who are absent for 10 consecutive school days or 5 consecutive days and have already received 5 unauthorised days previously (within the past calendar year) will be eligible for a fine.

You can expect that the vast majority of leave requests will be unauthorised and contribute to the potential for a penalty notice to be issued.

### **Persistent Absentees**

If your child's attendance falls below 90%, they are deemed to be a persistent absentee. This means that your child's attendance will be closely monitored, you will be at an increased risk of receiving a fine and if their attendance does not improve, a criminal record.

You will be invited into school to discuss an Attendance Improvement Plan if your child is a persistent absentee. If, for whatever reason, you cannot make it into school, we can set the plan by visiting your home. Where we have attendance concerns regarding your child, we may conduct an unannounced home visit to see why your child is not in school.

### **Punctuality**

It is vital that your child arrives to and from school on-time. Children who arrive late to school miss vital teaching time and their punctuality has a detrimental impact on their learning within the classroom. Lateness is also unfair on the teacher, who then has to find time to teach your child the learning they should have been on-time for. If your child's punctuality becomes a concern, then we will be writing to you and inviting you to a meeting, where a Punctuality Improvement Plan will be set and then reviewed with you. If, for whatever reason, you cannot make it into school, we can set the plan by visiting your home. Where we have punctuality concerns regarding your child, we may conduct an unannounced home visit to see why your child is continually late.

We have kept the school start times as they have been since March 2021. This means that there is a period of 10 minutes in which you can get your child(ren) into school before they are considered to be 'late.' Please see below so that you are well informed as to when your child will receive a late mark.

Start time (on time)	Late (before registers close)	Late (after registers close)
08.45 – 08.55	08.56 – 09.14	09.15 onwards

If your child is regularly late to school this can result in a referral for the beginning of the penalty notice procedure.

### **The Attendance Shop**

We enjoy celebrating children's attendance. At the end of each half term (key dates to be announced), every child's attendance will be calculated. If their attendance falls in to one of the celebration brackets below, they will be given an **Attendance Shop Voucher**. Pupils will be able to exchange their voucher in the Attendance Shop, where a variety of exciting and fun items will be available. This is a way of saying 'well done' to those children's whose attendance is very good. Please note that if your child has too many late marks but good attendance, they may not be able to go to the Attendance Shop.

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Attendance Shop</b>
100%	Attendance Voucher to choose a prize from Table 1
99.0 to 99.9%	Attendance Voucher to choose a prize from Table 2
98.0 to 98.9%	Attendance Voucher to choose a prize from Table 3
97.0 to 97.9%	Attendance Voucher to choose a prize from Table 4
96.6 to 96.9%	Attendance Certificate

Thank you for working with us to ensure that your children have good attendance and punctuality.

Kind Regards,

Mr. E. Gaibee  
**Headteacher**