



## Attendance Policy

***Our Ambition: To be the highest performing MAT in the country***

***Our Mission: To improve the communities we serve for the better***

Written by	L Connolly
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Approving Body	Strategic Development Committee
Signed Chair of Trustees	

***Vision:***

*Challenging educational orthodoxies so that every child makes good progress in core subjects;*

*all teachers are committed to personal improvement and fulfil their responsibilities;*

*all children receive a broad and balanced curriculum;*

*all academies strive to be outstanding.*

## **The FORGE Trust Attendance Policy**

### **Aims**

#### **1. Aims and scope**

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting parents/carers and pupils who are concerned about the return to school due to coronavirus

Across the FORGE trust, we aim to maintain a caring, supportive and disciplined learning environment where children benefit from the best possible education. All staff are committed to this aim. We would like to know if you think we are not meeting your expectations, so that we have an opportunity to respond. We would also like to know your opinion on the things we do well.

### **Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities**

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their age, gender, race, religion, belief, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. The FORGE Trust is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential. Policies are available on each of these that expand on this further.

All staff have equal access and inclusive rights to their work regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, belief, disability or ability. The FORGE Trust is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential. Policies are available on each of these that expand on this further.

### **Absence**

The FORGE Trust believes regular attendance is vital when it comes to children reaching their full academic potential, therefore we encourage all of our parents/carers to support us in giving your child every opportunity to achieve their best.

If your child is absent, please telephone the academy they are attending on the first day of absence and every day that follows - this also a safeguarding requirement and is imperative. If your child is absent for more than 1 day, please send a note addressed to the school office explaining the reason.

Absence is monitored daily across the trust and with your help we can ensure all of our children are safe and accounted for. Registers close at 9.30 am – anyone arriving after this time will be given a U code in the register. This equates to an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session.

If no reason for absence is given an absence letter from the academy will be sent home giving the dates of absence and asking for a reason why the child was absent. If the absence is prolonged or the child has poor attendance it is brought to the attention of the Principal, who will decide whether the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. If no reason is given after 2 weeks, the absences will automatically be classed as unauthorised.

Please ensure all medical appointments are taken out of academy time where at all possible, or at the very least the beginning or end of the day. The academy may need to request medical evidence if absences become a concern – the trust wants to support all families so please talk with the academy about any issues and we can explain the reasons for any request.

### **Punctuality**

Children who arrive late will get a late mark (usually at reception within the academy). Their names will be written down, and the reason why they are late. Please ensure your child is at the academy just before the beginning of each academy day. You will be able to find start and end times on the academy website. A list of children who are late is checked each week within each academy and if they are late on two or more occasions during that week a letter is sent home.

### **Holiday Requests**

As you may be aware after recent government changes parents/carers are not entitled to take their child out of school/academy during term time therefore “holidays forms” are now obsolete. As a Trust we do adhere to these changes in legislation and do not authorise holidays during term time. In the **most** exceptional circumstances and after the consideration of a detailed written request, the Principal (in collaboration with the Trust) has the final decision whether to authorise any leave of absence – if parents/carers still take their child out of the academy during term time when permission is not granted Legal Proceedings may be taken by the Local Authority. This is in the form of Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) or legal action through a Magistrates Court.

The FORGE Trust does appreciate the value of taking family holidays and also understands that many families wish to avoid inflated holiday costs during the traditional school holiday period. Therefore, each academy within the trust will not have INSET days at various times during the year. Instead they will block their INSET days and slightly amend term times accordingly to create one week (usually early June time) for families to book a holiday at a much more competitive price. Each academy will let you know their respective INSET week at the beginning of the academic year so that you have plenty of time to book a holiday.

## Support

We operate an open door policy at every academy within the trust so if you have difficulties with getting your child into school, please contact the academy and they will support you. All of our staff will be happy to help and all academies have specialist pastoral support available, e.g. a Child and Family Support Worker who can offer support and advice for parents.

All academies within the trust celebrate good attendance in the form of incentives and rewards on an individual, class and whole school basis. This information will be available on the academies website. 100% attendance is celebrated in every academy within the trust on a termly and annual basis. Medical appointments will not affect 100% attendance awards/certificates as long as we have a copy of the appointment letter as proof.

## Addendum to the Policy

This addendum applies from the start of the autumn term 2020 until the end of the 2020/21 academic year. It sets out changes to our normal attendance policy, and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal attendance policy continues to apply.

We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance changes. We will communicate any changes to staff, parents and pupils.

### 1. Guidance and definitions

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's (DfE's) [guidance](#) on school attendance during the 2020/21 academic year.

In section 3.2 of this addendum, where we refer to 'close contact', this means:

- Direct close contacts: face-to-face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face-to-face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- Proximity contacts: extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- Travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

This definition is from the DfE's [guidance on full reopening for schools](#) (see number 9 in 'the system of controls').

### 2. Attendance expectations

It is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age to attend school unless:

- They have been granted an authorised absence by the school in line with section our normal attendance policy
- They cannot attend school due to specific circumstances related to coronavirus (see section 4, below)

### **3. Where 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' applies**

We will only accept 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' in circumstances where a pupil's travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- Against guidance from Public Health England and/or the Department of Health and Social Care relating to the incidence of coronavirus or its transmission
- Prohibited by any legislation or statutory directions relating to the incidence of transmission of coronavirus

#### **3.1 Pupil develops symptoms or lives with someone who does**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day that their child needs to self-isolate. The pupil will stay at home until they or the symptomatic person they live with receives their coronavirus test results.

**If the pupil's test result is negative:** the pupil will return to school when they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus. They should continue to stay at home if they remain unwell (i.e. with a different illness).

**If the person the pupil lives with tests negative,** the pupil will stop self-isolating and return to school

#### **3.2 Pupil or a 'close contact' of theirs receives a positive test result**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school about the positive test result as soon as possible by telephone or email.

Pupils who test positive must self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and must only return to school when they no longer have symptoms (other than a cough or a loss of sense of smell or taste).

If a member of the pupil's household or a 'close contact' tests positive, the pupil must self-isolate for 14 days. The pupil must do this from when the member of their household first had symptoms, or the day the pupil last met with the 'close contact' who received the positive result.

See the definition for 'close contact' in section 2 of this addendum.

#### **3.3. Pupil has to quarantine after travel abroad**

The parent/carer must notify the school if their child has to quarantine after travel to a country that is not on the government's [exemptions list](#).

The pupil must quarantine for 14 days on their arrival to the UK and return to school thereafter.

#### **3.4 Pupil is required to shield during a local lockdown**

The parent/carer will notify the school if they are advised by the government to stay at home and will provide proof of their shielding letter by sending a scan to the school email address or a photocopy to the school address.

The pupil will stay at home until the shielding measures in the local area are paused. Once the shielding measures are lifted, we will contact the pupil's parent/carer to set the expectation that they can return to school. We will also work with families to discuss and allay concerns and consider any support requirements.

### **3.5 Remote learning provision**

If a pupil is not attending school because of circumstances related to coronavirus, but where the pupil is not ill, the school will provide the pupil access to remote education.

- Our approach and expectations regarding remote education are set out in our remote learning contingency plan/policy
- We will keep a record of, and monitor, pupil engagement with remote learning, but we will not track this information in the attendance register

### **4. Recording attendance**

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to 'exceptional circumstances' (as defined in our normal attendance policy)
- Unable to attend for reasons related to coronavirus (see appendix 1 for the relevant absence codes and when we will use them)

Pupils must arrive in school at their designated time slot on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9am.

### **5. Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent or carer by telephone, meeting (virtual or socially distanced or home visit (N.B. where home visits are made staff will wear masks and remain outside of the property, maintaining social distance at all times
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

If a pupil does not attend because they, and/or their parent/carer are concerned about returning to school because of coronavirus, we will

- Arrange a phone call/video meeting/in-school appointment between the parent/carer and a member of the SLT to explain the protective measures the school is taking to keep pupils safe
- Consider additional arrangements to facilitate the return to school

#### **5.1 Legal sanctions**

Please note that while our academy will work to offer appropriate support, reassurance and will consider tailored arrangements, our normal rules on legal sanctions apply.

### **6. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the LA or Department for Education is updated, and as a minimum once per term. At every review, it will be approved by the Strategic Development Committee of the Trust Board.

### Appendix 1: pupil absence codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's addendum to their school attendance guidance for the 2020/21 academic year. If not covered here, our normal attendance codes apply.

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate because they have symptoms or live with someone who does, and are waiting for their test results
<b>I</b>	Illness	Pupil remains unwell following a negative test result (i.e. with a different illness)
<b>I</b>	Illness	Pupil has to continue to self-isolate because they tested positive
<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because someone they live with tested positive
<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because they are a close contact of someone who tested positive
<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to quarantine (for 14 days) after a trip to a non-exempt country
<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is required to shield in the case of a local lockdown, or lives with someone who is required to shield
<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is asked not to attend in the case of local lockdown