# FLASH LEY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by: Chair of Governors Date: November 2026

To be reviewed: November 2027

## Introduction

At Flash Ley Primary School, we are committed to working together to ensure all pupils receive the best education possible and to enable them to achieve to the best of their ability. For this to happen, pupils need to be in school to access valuable teaching and learning opportunities.
This policy aims to make clear what is expected of parents and pupils and to assure parents of our willingness to work positively with them if problems arise.
Principles

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. The school will promote the importance of good attendance through the curriculum and personal/social opportunities.

Good attendance by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All pupils should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We will ensure that parents are aware of attendance concerns and work with them to ensure good attendance and punctuality. To support the school in our commitment to improve school attendance and punctuality, we have employed an independent Education Welfare Service – VIP Education who will provide advice and guidance to the school, parents, and pupils.

Pupils are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the pupil. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance and education does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

School staff are committed to working with parents to ensure any problems are dealt with straight away in order for pupils to feel happy and safe at Flash Ley Primary School and achieve to the best of their ability. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school and are on time.

For any attendance related concerns, please contact.
Mrs Wileman – office3@flashley.staffs.sch.uk

Education Welfare Officer from VIP Education. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

## Registration procedures

School opens at 8.45am and closes at 3.15pm.

Schools are required by law to take an attendance register twice a day and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil is absent, every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school

can authorise the absence, not parents. Therefore, information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason e.g., illness, medical appointments, or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:
parents keeping pupils off from school unnecessarily.
truancy before or during the school day.
absences which have never been properly explained.
pupils who arrive to school after the close of the register
school refusal.
holidays taken during term time that have not been authorised by the head teacher.

When completing the register, school follow the DFE Working together to improve school attendance guidance to determine which relevant code to use; Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

The register will be taken twice a day, at the start of the morning and the afternoon.

**Morning registration**

The morning register is taken at 8.50am. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 9.15am are recorded as late – L.

Registration closes at 9.15am. Pupils arriving to school after this time are late - after registration closes, and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence – U.

**Afternoon registration**

The afternoon register is taken at 1.15pm. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 1.30pm are recorded as late – L.

Registration closes at 1.30pm. Pupils arriving to school after this time are late - after registration closes, and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence – U.

**Late procedures**

Parents are requested to contact the school office if their child is going to be late and provide a reason for lateness.

If lateness is a cause for concern, the following procedures will be followed:

- Parents will receive a letter informing of the concern.
- If no improvement, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from VIP Education will contact parents to further discuss and offer support and advice to improve punctuality.
- If still no improvement, parents and pupils will be invited to a meeting with the EWO to discuss the reasons for lateness and to offer support. Referrals to

wider support services may be offered if needed. The discussion held will be documented by the EWO and an action plan to improve punctuality will be devised with parents and the pupil during the meeting and a review date set if needed.

- If no improvement is seen after the meeting has taken place, the school may follow Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for persistent lateness.

**Reporting Absence**

If a pupil is absent from school, we ask parents to:

- Contact the school office by 9.00am on the first morning of absence.
- Reply promptly to any request or enquiry concerning an absence.

If parents do not contact the school on the morning of the first day of absence, a member of the administration staff will try to contact them to find out the reason for absence. This ensures that the parent is aware their child is not in school enabling the parent, where necessary, to establish that their child is safe. The school may also ask the EWO from VIP Education to establish contact either by telephone, text message or a home visit may be completed. If a reason is still not known after 5 school days, the absence will be unauthorised.

**Children Missing in Education**

**Schools have a duty by law to refer any absence of 20 days or more to Local Authority Children Missing in Education department where they have been unable to establish contact with the parent/pupil or have general concerns about the absence.**

To avoid any referrals, parents are requested to inform the school if they are moving house/area or country and to provide a forwarding address, contact number and the name of the new school if known.

**Medical Absence**

Schools have the responsibility to decide whether an absence can be authorised on medical grounds. If the school has concerns about the level of medical absence that a pupil has incurred, they will contact the parents to discuss it further and to find out whether their GP or other health professional has been contacted.

If the authenticity of the absence is in question or the pupil has a prolonged absence, parents may be asked to provide evidence that their child is too unwell to attend school by providing a note from a medical professional or a copy of any prescribed medication. If the school does not receive medical evidence, the absences will be unauthorised.

For pupils with a mental health issue affecting attendance, Flash Ley Primary School follow the DFE guidance Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)

For more information on medical absence –
Illness and your child's education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

**Medical and Dental Appointments**

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays whenever possible. If this is not possible, confirmation of the appointment will be required prior to authorising the absence and an M code used on the register to record when the child has attended the appointment.
Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents are expected to return their children to school following the appointment.

**Monitoring attendance**

The school aims to achieve to be in line with national attendance each academic year. To ensure this, we monitor attendance regularly.
The school has established a system for monitoring attendance and lateness, the purpose and aims of which are as follows:

- To improve the overall percentage of attendance and improve pupils' punctuality at school.
- To make attendance and punctuality a high priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance and punctuality related data.
- To develop and implement an effective system of communication between school and home.
- To reward good attendance and punctuality.
- To work effectively with the Local Authority and other agencies that support attendance and punctuality.

Our Independent Education Welfare Officer from VIP Education and Flash Ley Primary School staff regularly monitors every pupil's attendance. Where there appears to be a particular problem with attendance, the following procedures are applied:

- A letter is sent to parents informing them of a decline in school attendance and the need for this to improve due to the impact on their child's education and social development.
- If no improvement seen, parents and pupils where appropriate will be invited into a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer and Flash Ley Primary School staff to discuss the concerns and to offer support around any possible barriers, problems at home or at school which may be contributing to low attendance. Referrals to wider support services may be offered where appropriate. The discussion held will be documented by the EWO and an action plan to improve school attendance will be devised during the meeting and a review date set if needed.

- If school attendance does not improve, the school may follow Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for pupils with persistent absence.

**Rewarding good school attendance**

School attendance is rewarded weekly in celebration assembly with the highest class attendance getting Flash and individual pupils who have 100% attendance will get a certificate at the end of each term.

**Requests for leave of absence**

Amendments to the Education Regulations 2006 make it clear that head teachers should only grant a leave of absence during term time if there are exceptional circumstances to justify this.

If a parent wishes to request leave for their child for any reason, they must apply in advance and in writing using the leave of absence request form which can be found at the school office or on the school website.

Where a child does not reside with both parents, it is the responsibility of the parent making the request to inform the other parent. The school will send a letter to the parent making the request informing them if the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

If a request for leave has not been received and we have reason to believe a pupil is on holiday, a home visit may be completed by VIP Education and a letter will be sent to parents requesting medical evidence for the absence. If no medical evidence can be provided, the absence may be recoded as unauthorised, and a penalty notice request sent to the Local Authority.

**Changes to Penalty Notices for School Absence from 19th August 2024**

The new National Framework introduces consistency in the use of Penalty Notices across England by introducing a new national threshold at which they are considered. The framework increases the amount of the Penalty Notice and introduces a new national limit of 2 Penalty Notices within a 3-year rolling period to break cycles of repeat offending. In line with the guidance, Staffordshire County Council will prioritise the 'support first' approach expecting that support will have been offered to families in cases where it is appropriate. However, Penalty Notices can be issued without a Notice to Improve in cases where support is not appropriate (such as leave of absence in term time) or when support has not been engaged with. Penalty Notices are requested by schools and academies and issued by the Local Authority to the parents/carers of statutory school age children, per parent, per child. For example: two children in a family absent from school for a leave of absence may result in each parent receiving a Penalty Notice for each child at the below rates:

- First offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

- Second Offence (within 3 years) - the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Leave of Absence (Holidays) Penalty Notices can be requested by schools for leave of absence in term time for 5 or more days. This can be consecutive absence, or non- consecutive. In line with the National Framework, the Local Authority retains the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, when parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking multiple term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events, or a combination of non-attendance due to leave of absence and unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence Penalty Notices can be requested by schools when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. In these circumstances a Notice to Improve may be sent by the Local Authority on behalf of the school, this will stipulate the support that has already been implemented and the ongoing support that is available to the parent and child to improve school attendance. The Notice to Improve will also detail the expected improvements that must be made over a set time frame to prevent the Penalty Notice being issued. Further information on the National Framework can be found within Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024. The National Framework comes into effect from 19th August 2024. Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. Flash Ley Primary School will notify the parents of the days the pupil must not be present in a public place. This type of penalty notice is not included in the National Framework and therefore not subject to the same considerations about support being provided or count towards the limit as part of the escalation process in the case of repeat offences for non-attendance.

A session is equivalent to half a day in school.

## Elective Home Education

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child, school will contact the parent and discuss their reasons in more detail, offering support to deal with any issues raised. If after this time the parent still wishes to home educate their child, the school will inform the Local Authority of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register.

Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record. Prior to deciding to home

educate, parents are requested to contact Staffordshire County Council Elective Home Education department.

**Summary**

It is vital to a child's progress that they attend school as often as possible and that they are on time.

There are strong and proven links between pupils' attendance and educational achievement. Just 17 days absence from school in a year could mean a drop in a GCSE grade within all subjects.

**Impact of absence:**

| Missed number of days | Missed number of sessions | Missed number of weeks | Missed number of lessons |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| 3 | 6 | 0.5 | 15 |
| 5 | 10 | 1 | 25 |
| 7.5 | 15 | 1.5 | 35 |
| 10 | 20 | 2 | 50 |
| 12.5 | 25 | 2.5 | 65 |
| 15 | 30 | 3 | 75 |
| 17.5 | 35 | 3.5 | 90 |

Impact of lateness over a school year

5 minutes late every day = 3 days absence

15 minutes late every day = 10 days absence

30 minutes late every day =19 days absence