

Fairfield First School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Person responsible for policy: _____

Date adopted by Governing Body: _____ SEPT 22 _____

Signed: _____ (Chair of Governors)

Review date: __ SEPT 23 _____

INTRODUCTION

At Fairfield First School, we recognise that regular and prompt attendance is extremely important. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to get the most from the educational opportunities provided within our School and achieve maximum progress. Absence can lead to educational disadvantage for a pupil and even place them at risk. Truancy all too frequently results in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

In order to maximise rates of attendance, which is one of our underlying aims, we must as a staff remain vigilant and be prepared to react positively and without delay. The issues are complex, since pupils may be failing to attend regularly for a variety of reasons, some of which may be outside the School's immediate control, but nevertheless we must actively pursue the goal of regular attendance. To this end, we will investigate absences rigorously and will applaud and commend regular attendance.

We will ensure through the School Brochure, the School Website, and other communications that parents are made aware of the School's policy on attendance; namely that individual absences will be carefully investigated and that unjustified absence will not be tolerated.

The law is quite definite that it is the legal responsibility of a parent to ensure that children of compulsory School age receive efficient full-time education whether by regular School attendance or otherwise. They are responsible for ensuring that children attend School and stay at School. Furthermore, parents are not only under a legal duty to send their children to School regularly, but also to ensure that they arrive on time, properly dressed and in a condition to learn. However, as with other aspects of education, regular attendance can only be implemented with the support of parents and School. The School and its parents must work together and maintain close links to achieve success in this and all other policies. However, whilst it is only right that we recognise the problems of individual pupils and families, the aim must always be to expect regular attendance.

The following guidelines are designed to aid staff in carrying out effective procedures concerned with attendance.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Children cannot learn if they do not attend – School is a prerequisite to learning.
- Good attendance plays a vital role in communicating the School's values and expectations.
- The School promotes a positive experience where there is an emphasis on developing good relationships with pupils and responding to their needs.
- We believe that it is the responsibility of staff to promote good attendance.

AIMS

- To develop attitudes and behaviour that enable children to take an active and responsible role in the adult world.
- Recognition by staff, pupils, parents/carers of the importance of attendance to the overall achievement of pupils in the School environment.
- To promote a positive attitude towards attendance and good time keeping with pupils and parents/carers.
- To communicate clearly to parents/carers the School's policy for attendance and good time keeping.
- To support pupils who are having difficulties attending and arriving on time.
- To create an expectation which gives attendance a high profile and ensures that absence is kept to a minimum.
- To ensure that non-attendance and poor punctuality are effectively monitored and absences are followed up.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Class Teachers will maintain electronic records of attendance for their class, following registration procedures.
- If a child is absent, without explanation the School Office will contact the parents immediately.
- Any pupil giving cause for concern must be referred to the Headteacher to check trends in absence.
- The Headteacher will monitor attendance on a regular basis. Problems are to be followed up by the Class Teacher, if deemed more appropriate.
- The Headteacher is responsible for effective liaison with any relevant outside agencies.
- The Headteacher will ensure that individual members of staff are following guidelines on completing online registers.
- The Headteacher must ensure that parents/carers are aware of the times for the beginning of each session and the procedures related to lateness and absence, School term dates and other additional days when a pupil is not expected to attend School.

PARENTS/CARERS

- Have legal duties to ensure their child attends School or receives an appropriate education if attendance is impossible.
- Will provide the Head Teacher/Class Teacher as soon as possible with reasons for absence – this must be before 9am on the first day of absence.
- Must inform the School when their child will be returning to School following a period of absence.
- Must inform School, by completing the relevant form, if they intend to take unauthorised holiday, during term time.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

The register is a document required by law and we must recognise that we are under a statutory obligation to complete it with care and accuracy. The Education Regulations 1991 relating to Pupil's Attendance Records require that registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory School age is authorised or unauthorised. Registers will be consulted together with the authorisation of absences in the case of legal proceedings.

Registers will be kept online through the ScholarPack MIS package and information will be stored within the package indefinitely. Prior to each morning and afternoon session, secure (password protected) online registers will be taken by the appropriate member of staff. Registers are submitted to the office, via ScholarPack. Registers will be called twice daily at the commencement of morning and afternoon School.

- The member of staff leading the session must complete and submit the class register, using their own, personal ScholarPack account.
- Registers should be completed and submitted to the office by 9am.
- If a pupil is late to registration but arrives before the register officially closes (30 minutes into the start of each session – DfES guidelines) it shall count as present.
- Notes and messages regarding absences should be completed by either the Class Teacher or a member of office staff.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

There are two types of absence for pupils of compulsory School age: Authorised and Unauthorised.

Only the School, within the context of the law, can approve absence. The fact that a note has been offered by the parent/carer does not mean that the School will authorise it if the School does not accept the explanation offered as a valid/exceptional reason. Authorisation for absence can be given retrospectively.

Authorised absence: where the School has either given approval in advance, or has accepted a written explanation offered afterwards, as satisfactory justification for absence.

Authorised absences may include:

illness;
hospital, doctor, dentist or other medical related appointment;
days of religious observance
exceptional family circumstances, such as a bereavement;

Unauthorised absences may include:

family holidays;
for a day out;
to visit relatives;
because of getting up late;
because they don't feel like going to School;
to look after other members of the family;
due to long term illness of other family members;

All medical and dental appointments should be made, whenever possible, outside of School hours.

LEAVE IN TERM TIME

Should a parent wish to request leave during term time, they should first complete the form "Request for Leave during Term Time" This is available from the School Office and/or the [school website](#). Parents will then receive notification , from the School, that either:

- explains that the request has not been approved and a reminder that, if taken, this leave will be recorded as unauthorised and may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine
- explains that the request has been approved because there are exceptional circumstances

Parents should be mindful of the fact that, as a result of amendments to the Education Regulations 2006, Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. As a general guide, Headteachers have been informed that, although each application should be considered on its individual merits, any activity, holiday or event that can be arranged during the annual 13-week holiday time should not be authorised during the school term. Should Headteachers require it, further advice is available from the Education Investigation Service. Once the Headteacher becomes aware of the fact that an unauthorised absence has been taken, whether parents have informed the school or not, he or she must inform the Education Investigation Service, who will decide whether to apply a Penalty Notice Fine. Although the Headteacher may sympathise with parents who, for different circumstances, feel they need to take holidays during term time, it has been made very clear that the Leadership and Management of Schools will be subject to severe criticism if Headteachers do not follow the processes described above. Should parents decide to take unauthorised holiday absence during term time, please do not ask your child to deceive their teachers and friends as we would still prefer that the children have the opportunity to share their experiences. More importantly, asking children to deceive adults is not a good message to be giving them.

Further information about the processes outlined above can be found in the following documents from Worcestershire County Council's Education Investigation Service – "Education Penalty Notice - Code of Conduct" "Leave in Term Time – Absence Policy"

EXCLUSIONS

Where a pupil has been temporarily excluded it will be treated as authorised absence.

Permanent exclusion – treated as authorised absence until confirmed and then removed from the School roll.

FOLLOWING UP ABSENCES

Parents should telephone School, before 9.30am, with reasons for the absence and the expected length of absence. If parents do not make contact the following steps will be taken:

- A member of School staff will contact parents to seek an explanation via telephone. All contacts held within the School MIS will be contacted until a reasonable excuse is given and the whereabouts of the children is clear.
- If contact cannot be made by telephone a Senior Member of School staff will visit the child's home address
- If necessary, at this point, the Police will be notified of the situation.

PUNCTUALITY

Children should be on the school playground, prepared for the morning bell at 8.45am. Upon the sound of the bell at 8.45am children should line up in their class groups, to be collected by a member of staff. Any children who arrive after 8.45am should go immediately to the School Office, they should not attempt to enter their classroom before doing this. Late arrivals create disruption to assemblies / lessons, which is not fair on those children who are late or the children who have arrived on time.

We accept that anybody can be late for a variety of different reasons and that these are occasionally outside of anybody's control. In an attempt to reduce the number of late arrivals and thus the number of disturbances that children have to put up with at the start of the School day, we ask all parents of children who arrive after the classes have left the playground bring their children to the Office entrance to 'sign in'. If a child is late more than three times in a half term, we will make either verbal contact with the child's parents or send a letter asking parents to ensure that their child arrives on time in future. Subsequent late arrivals within the same half term could result in us asking parents to provide us with a further explanation for their child's late arrival.

Notes recording the reasons for late arrivals, early or late collections and the total minutes of being late will be inputted by the School Office and stored within ScholarPack.

The Offence of Failing to Ensure Regular School Attendance

If a child of compulsory School age, who is registered at a School, fails to attend regularly at the then the parent may be guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Efforts will be made by the School to offer appropriate support. Since March 2001 there has been a more serious offence where a parent who, knowing that his/her child is failing to attend regularly at School, fails without reasonable justification to cause him to attend (Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). Under this higher offence a warrant can be issued compelling a parent to attend court. Prosecution under section 444(1A) can lead to a custodial sentence.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY

- Parents, pupils and staff are reminded of the importance of good attendance in newsletters and on the School website.
- The School will award certificates to those children achieving 100% attendance for the term and the whole academic year.

- The families of children whose attendance falls below 90% will be sent a letter informing them of poor attendance and requesting an improvement.
- If attendance falls below 90%, it is classed as Persistent Absence.
- Termly reports will be made by the Headteacher to the School's governing body on the issue of attendance/punctuality.
- An annual report of attendance will be included with each child's academic report.

Attendance target

Our Attendance Target for the 2022/23 Academic Year is **97%**

Fairfield First School

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Twitter: [Fairfield First](https://twitter.com/Fairfield_First)

Dear xxxxx,

Re: Punctuality

I am writing to you to emphasise the importance of being in school on time as there have been numerous incidents of your child/ren routinely arriving at school after the morning bell at 8.45a.m.

School starts at 8.45 a.m. every day.

Children need to be in their class line at 8.45 a.m. so that they can start their lessons promptly.

Children who arrive late are greatly disadvantaged because they miss starting the day with their peers and the beginning of lessons. This means that they are often unsettled and confused about tasks. Their teacher will not always be able to re-explain work.

It is also very important that children establish good routines and habits in preparation for the rest of their lives. Punctuality is a life skill that they need to develop whilst they are young.

It is essential that you ensure that your child arrives at school on time to prevent disruption to your child's own learning and that of others.

We are required to monitor children's punctuality and attendance. On-going lateness (after the class register has been taken) is classified as an unauthorised absence and this is contrary to The Education Act.

Currently your child/ren has missed a total of xxx minutes of learning time.

We understand that there may be rare occasions when you are unavoidably late due to unforeseen circumstances. On these occasions please make sure that you contact the school office to inform us when you will arrive.

High levels of poor punctuality can result in a referral to the Educational Welfare Service or other agencies which have a duty to investigate further and could result in legal action being taken against you.

If you are experiencing difficulties with punctuality and would like to talk to us about it, please make an appointment to do so with your class teacher or myself.

Please keep in mind that Breakfast Club is available to children from 7:45a.m.

Yours sincerely

Scott Smith
Headteacher



Fairfield First School

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Headteacher: Mr Scott Smith

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🐦 : Fairfield_First

Date

Dear

Your child:
Date of Birth:
Registered pupil at:

IRREGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE - FINAL NOTICE – RESPONSE REQUIRED

School records show that your child's attendance is now **(enter text here)** % which includes **(enter text here)** sessions of unauthorised absence. Therefore their attendance is deemed to be irregular.

S444 of the Education Act 1996 states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence." Attending regularly also includes a requirement to attend punctually.

In light of the number of recorded unauthorised absences, consideration will now be given as to whether an offence may have been committed under the Education Act.

TAKE NOTICE this matter will be forwarded to our legal services department for their consideration and should you have any information, details or wish to make representations regarding the unauthorised absences then please let me have these in writing within 14 days so they can be included in the papers forwarded to the legal team.

The Local Authority may commence legal proceedings against you under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, in respect of this matter and/or any further complaint received from the school, or other places of learning. In the event of your conviction by a Magistrates' Court, you may be liable to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or the possibility of imprisonment for up to three months per offence.

Additionally, I am required to inform you that the Local Authority has a statutory duty to consider applying for an Education Supervision Order in respect of your child, together with a duty to consult with the Social Services Department.

Dated this xxxxxx day of xxxxxx

Yours sincerely

Scott Smith
Headteacher

Request for Leave during Term Time



To: The Headteacher of **FAIRFIELD FIRST SCHOOL** Date:

I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

my child (full name) Class:

for the period from (date) to (date)

The **exceptional** circumstances and reason for this request are:

.....
.....

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child/ren (full name/s) / Class:

.....

School(s) attended:

.....
.....

PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF BOTH PARENT/CARERS EVEN IF THEY DO NOT LIVE WITH THE CHILD

PARENT/CARER 1

Name: (Print)

Address:

.....

I have read and understood the Guidance Notes on reverse of this request form.

Signature:

PARENT/CARER 2

Name: (Print)

Address:

.....

I have read and understood the Guidance Notes on reverse of this request form.

Signature:

Please return completed form to the school office.

The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

For Office Use Only

Current Attendance.....%

Last Year's Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time (this Academic Year)

Agreed / Not Agreed

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed Date

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent/carer

Guidance Notes for Parent/carers requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parent/carers wishing the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully and then complete and send to the Headteacher the request form overleaf. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered, **at least 4 weeks before** the desired period of absence. Parent/carers are strongly advised not to finalise any holiday booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision on their request.
2. The granting of leave of absence in school term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the school. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The Department for Education (DfE) and Worcestershire Children First (WCF) policy is that family holidays should not be taken in school term time. Where such requests are made, for the leave to be granted, the Headteacher should decide if there are **exceptional circumstances**.
3. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parent/carers need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence the demands of the National and wider School Curriculum especially at the Key Stage assessment stage. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request;
 - the age of the child;
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements;
 - the overall attendance pattern of the child;
 - the nature of the trip.
 - children on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
4. Where parent/carers/carers have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. It is possible that because of these factors different decisions may be made. It is hoped that if this situation arises parent/carers will be persuaded to accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any other requests.
5. Requests should be made by the parent/carer/carer with whom the child normally resides with. Where requests for a grant of leave of absence are received from only one parent/carer/carer the response letter – agreeing or refusing – will be either addressed to both/all parent/carers/carers where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all parent/carers/carers are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent/carer will receive a penalty notice.
6. Should the School decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parent/carers/carers still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** which may be subject to a Holiday Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent/carer per child. If not paid within 21 days this fine increases to £120 per parent/carer per child. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.