
Attendance Policy

Reviewed 21.06.2021

Next Review May 2024



Fairfields
School

Attendance Policy Fairfields School

Introduction

Fairfields School is committed to providing all pupils with an appropriate and effective education in a safe and happy environment. We believe that education is essential for all and to achieve their full potential children need to attend school regularly and punctually. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

All children of compulsory school age must receive a suitable full-time education.

Section 7 of [The Education Act \(1996\)](#) says parents must make sure their child is regularly attending school or 'otherwise' (i.e. another suitable alternative). [Section 444\(1\)](#) of the same Act says parents are guilty of an offence if their child doesn't regularly attend school.

The Department for Education (DfE) [statutory guidance for schools](#) (page 5) reiterates that responsibility for ensuring attendance lies with parents, including care givers or anyone with 'parental responsibility'.

Aims

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents / carers do not have this authority.

Consequently not all absences supported by parents / carers will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent / carer.

School procedures

The school door opens at 8.45am until 9am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Attendance and Absence – Registration Period

- The Register is taken by 9.30am each day and pupil's attendance or absence is indicated in the register with the appropriate code
- Pupils in attendance will be marked Present with / = am or \ = pm accordingly
- The register will remain open until 10.00am.
- Therefore pupils arriving between 9.30am – 10.00am will be marked as late (Code L).
- Any pupil arriving after 10.00am will be marked absent as code U (meaning the pupil is in school but has missed the registration period).
- Any pupil arriving after 10.00am due to school transport will be marked as code Y.
- The register will open at 1pm and close at 1.30pm for the afternoon session.

If a pupil is absent and we have received no message from parents or carer, the office will telephone home on the first day of absence and record the reason for absence and the expected return date.

Attendance concerns – Persistent Absentees

As a school we have a responsibility to monitor children's attendance in school and respond when pupils are persistently absent. At Fairfield's we want to have a partnership with our parents and do this in a supportive way.

Fairfield's School takes due regard to absences in respect of medical conditions or reasonable explained absences and in these cases the situation will be monitored.

Long term absentees may find returning to school difficult. For some pupils a personalised reintegration plan may be needed.

If a pupil has had good attendance (95% and above) a message will be sent home to the parents thanking them for ensuring their child comes to school regularly, using the ParentApp. This will be done at the end of each half term.

Pupil attendance will be reviewed fortnightly (Appendix A) with any concerns being brought to the Headteacher or to a DSL meeting. Concerns may include:

- *8 or more days authorised absence in a two week period (persistently absence)*
- *3 or more days of unauthorised absence in a two week period*
- *Where there is a regular pattern of absence over a longer period (four weeks/half term)*
- *No improvement has been made after attendance discussions*
- *Concerns around the reasons given for pupil absence*
- *The teacher has recorded pupil attendance as a safeguarding concern*

Informal stage: The class teacher will phone the family and enquire about the child in a supportive way. They will raise their initial concern and then offer any support. If the child is absent when the call is made, the teacher will also find out when the pupil is due to return to school.

5 Stage Formal model (Appendix B) to respond when pupils are persistently absent from school.

Stage 1: Telephone call home (Family Support Worker)

Stage 2: Letter home (Family Support Worker/Headteacher)

Stage 3: Parent Meeting where a parenting contract is set up (Headteacher)

Stage 4: Parent Meeting where the contract is reviewed, closed or extended (Headteacher)

Stage 5: Advise a possible referral to Local Authority (Headteacher)

Exceptional Circumstances

From 1st September 2013 there is **NO** entitlement for parents /carers to take their child on holiday during term time. In accordance with the amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

The Headteacher may only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a

Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance.

- Access to Specialist Holiday accommodation to meet the pupils individual special educational needs.

In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the Chair of Governors prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. Evidence would be required in each case.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- 1) The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils).
- 2) Year six transition day (for pupils in year six).

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously/terminally ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments

Approval for extended holidays abroad, in the family's home country will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. If consent is given it will be for a maximum of 6 weeks with an agreed return date. If the pupil fails to attend after this period, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised and will be referred to the education and inclusion Partnership Team at the Local Authority. If deemed necessary, Welfare calls/emails will be carried out during this period of absence.

If a Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for the Headteacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.

Parents/carers should contact the school directly if they feel there are exceptional circumstances that warrant taking their child out of school during term time.

If leave from school during term time is granted the Headteacher will determine the number of days that the child can be away from school and the parent will be informed in writing.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Parents/carers should be aware that if they take their child on holiday in term time without the authorisation of the Headteacher they may be issued with a **FIXED PENALTY NOTICE**.

Responsibilities

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Contacting the school office and SEN transport if applicable on the first morning of absence
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the senior leadership team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals to Educational Entitlement service
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Discussing attendance issues at parent / carer meetings where necessary.

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late is recorded correctly
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.

Family Support Worker is responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head Teacher
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance and reporting to the Governing Body (Appendix C)
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Making referrals to the Educational Entitlement service
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Educational Entitlement key worker
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Equal Opportunities:

We are firmly committed to the principles of equal opportunities. We believe that all pupils are entitled to learning experiences, which will enable them to achieve their potential and enrich their lives. We place

great value on diversity and treat every member of the school as an individual. This means we value equally the unique qualities of each individual.

Monitoring

We need consistent attendance management throughout the school. In addition to the above monitoring tasks school Governors monitor attendance during full Governing Body meetings and Excellence and Enjoyment sub-committee meetings.

Appendix A: Fortnightly Attendance Tracker



ATTENDANCE TRACKER

[illegible]

Appendix B: Absence Management Proforma and Model Letters

Name:

Class:

Date:

Attendance Concern				
Stage of Process	Action	Who	Date	Comments
Informal Stage	Supportive phone call home			
Stage 1	<p>Phone call home</p> <p><u>Script</u></p> <p>I have been monitoring * attendance which is currently *This is low. Is there anything we can do to improve * attendance? I will continue to monitor * attendance and hope to see an improvement over the next three weeks.</p> <p>After 3 weeks if attendance improved – phone call home/email home</p> <p>We have noticed that * has attended more regularly- thank you for helping make this improvement. We will continue to monitor to ensure this is maintained. Please remember to contact me if you need any help to make sure your child attends regularly.</p>			
Stage 2	1 st Letter			
Stage 3	2 nd Letter Absence Management meeting			
Stage 4	Absence Management meeting			
Stage 5	No sufficient improvement referral to EET			

NB: Additional Evidence to support pupil absence e.g. Medical letters to be attached.

Approved by Governors 21.06.2021

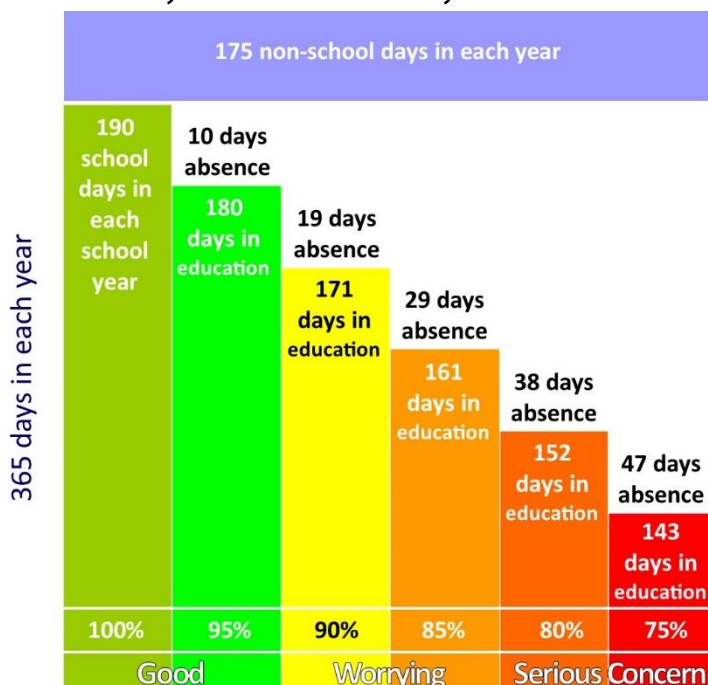
Bmwnglt

Letter 1: Ongoing absence

Dear

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions thathas been absent from school. I attach for your child's registration certificate indicating the sessionswas absent.

Parents have a 'legal duty' to ensure their child attends school. Every single day a child is absent from school is a day of lost learning. Sometimes attendance percentages can be misleading. The chart below converts these into number of days missed across the year.



I am sure that you share my concern and would wish to work with us to improve’s attendance. If we can help in any way, perhaps through the Family Worker team, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

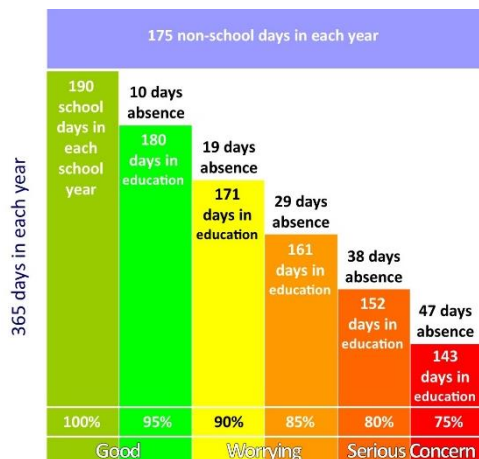
Letter 2: No improvement

Dear

Re:

Despite previous attempts to advise you, I note with concern there has been no significant improvement in your child's attendance at school.

.....'s attendance is currently ...% This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.



Parents have a 'legal duty' to ensure their child attends school. Every single day a child is absent from school is a day of lost learning. We understand that sometimes attendance percentages can be misleading. The chart below converts these into number of days missed across the year.

As there has been no improvement in 's attendance, I must advise you that further absences as a result of illness will require medical evidence. If this is not provided, further absences will be unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance meeting. The time and date have been set for at It is important that you and attend this meeting for us to talk about the issues around poor attendance.

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me as soon as possible so that a mutually convenient time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and the absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Education Entitlement Team, which could lead to the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix C: Attendance Reporting Proforma



Attendance Report Term **1 2020-2021**

Period: 03-09-2020 to 28-10-2020 Scope: whole school	Sessions	Days	%
Attendances			
Authorised absences			
Unauthorised absences			
Possible attendance			
Including			
Approved educational activity			
Lates before register closes			
Lates after reg. closed			
Unexplained absences			

	Number of days absent in the year	Attendance grade indicator
95% and above	10 days or less	High
94% – 90%	Between 19 – 9 days	Above average
89% - 85%	Between 20 -29 days	Average
Below 85%	More than 30 days	Low

Attendance	% pupils
95% and above	34/118 = 34%
94% – 90%	0/118 = 0%
89% - 85%	31/118 = 26%
Below 85%	5/118 = 4%

Attendance Comparison Tracker

	Term1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6	overall
2017-2018	94.12	92.44	91.26	91.52	92.39	94.25	92.84
2018-2019	93.24	90.49	90.51	92.61	92.55	91.40	91.70
2019-2020	91.91	88.09	91.68	No Attendance monitored due to COVID - 19			
2020-2021	88.28						

Analysis