

### **Guidance on Fairfields School Attendance Policy**

Section 7 of [The Education and Inspectors Act \(1996\)](#) says **parents must make sure their child is regularly attending school** or 'otherwise' (i.e. another suitable alternative)

#### **School Attendance Procedure**

- The school door opens at 8.45am until 9am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.
- 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 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 L. If they are absent due to school transport it is code Y1
- The register will open at 1pm and close at 1.30pm for the afternoon session.

#### **Absence**

Parents must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office team, who can be contacted via 01604714777 or [officestaff@fairfields.northants.sch.uk](mailto:officestaff@fairfields.northants.sch.uk)

Parents must notify on each day of absence or inform school of when the child is scheduled to return.

#### **Medical Appointment**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parent can do this by phoning or emailing the school office or by notifying their class teacher.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible.

#### **Unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach the parent, they will try all of the pupil's emergency contacts.
- If we receive no correspondence by the morning of day 2 a home visit will be carried out. If unable to make contact we will consider a mash referral or contacting the police.
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, carry out additional home visits and call siblings settings if appropriate, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer and/or social care if they are involved with the family
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals e.g. open an EHA

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

**Notices to improve** - If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support. **Penalty notices** - The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

## Absence due to exceptional circumstances

The Headteacher may only grant leave of absence for 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**.

Examples of where a leave of absence maybe authorised due to exceptional circumstances:

1. **Medical or Therapeutic Needs:** If a holiday is recommended as part of a medical treatment plan or therapy regimen, especially if the timing of such treatment is critical to the child's health and well-being.
2. **Family Respite:** When the family is under significant stress due to the intensive care needs of the child, and a holiday is seen as necessary respite. This is particularly relevant if it helps maintain the mental and emotional health of both the child and their caregivers. This may also involve specialist accommodation, or the availability of additional carers to support.
3. **Unique Educational Opportunities:** If the holiday includes a unique educational component that would benefit the child's learning and development, such as visiting a specialist facility, museum, or engaging in an activity that provides educational value aligned with the child's needs.
4. **Critical Family Circumstances:** When a parent or close family member is in the armed forces and home on leave, or when a family member is facing a terminal illness, and the holiday represents a final opportunity for family bonding.
5. **Therapeutic Travel:** When the holiday destination provides a specific therapeutic benefit, such as a climate that alleviates a medical condition, reduced sensory overload due to it being a quieter time of year or access to unique therapeutic services not available locally.

## 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

The Headteacher considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via our website or the school office.

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**.

## Procedures for monitoring attendance

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

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 to respond when pupils are persistently absence from school.

Stage 1: Telephone call home (Family Support Worker)

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

Stage 3: Parent Meeting where an attendance success plan is set up (Headteacher)

During this meeting it is important to be supportive and unpick the barriers to the child's absence. A plan can then be put in place.

An Early Help Assessment maybe required at this point of the process.

Stage 4: Parent Meeting where the attendance success plan is reviewed and closed or a Notice to improve is issued (Headteacher)

Stage 5: Advise of a discussion with the Local Authority which may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued (Headteacher)

## Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. **Please note:** There is **NO** entitlement for parents /carers to take their child on holiday during term time. If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised and we will consider legal action.

**You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.**

### Section A – to the headteacher, I wish to apply for

<b>Child's Name</b>		
<b>Class</b>		
<b>Dates of requested absence</b>	<b>From:</b>	<b>To:</b>
<b>Names of siblings in school also requesting a leave of absence</b>		

### Section B

Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the **circumstances** which make your **application exceptional**; and therefore the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements.

### Section C

I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides.  
 The information I have given on this form is correct.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

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**Section D – For School Use Only**

Child's Name:

Current attendance rate:

Tick as appropriate	
	Request approved for From: <span style="float: right;">number of days</span> <span style="float: right;">To:</span>  Expected return date to school
	A personal discussion with you is requested. Please contact:
	Request not approved as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress.  <b>PLEASE NOTE: This leave of absence form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning letter to parent/carers. Any unauthorised absence during this period of time may be subject to a penalty notice for non attendance being issued.</b>

Headteacher:

Date: