



Fairfield Primary School

Attendance Policy

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FAIRFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Fairfield Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website. This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

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 and their ability to meet age-related learning expectations.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance. 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.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school, which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow-up non-attendance at school.

Definitions

Parent – (from Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) includes all natural parents (whether they are married or not), any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person, and any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

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 do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents 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.

Compulsory school age – A child is of compulsory school age from the term commencing on or after their fifth birthday until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen, and applies to the parents of all children all who are registered at any state provided educational setting including academies.

Persistent absenteeism – Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason. This means that persistent absence is equal to 38 sessions (19 days) absence from school in any one academic year.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.

- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow-up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve an individual pupil's attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the School Inclusion Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Cumbria LA and the DfE where requested.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Staff taking registration

Staff taking registration 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 Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Identifying trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the School Inclusion service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Inclusion Officer.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Senior Lead responsible for attendance:

Our Senior Lead on attendance is responsible for:

- Monitoring individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality and ensuring useful data is reported to the Head teacher.
- Contact and work with parents or carers regarding concerns about their child's attendance.

- Arranging meetings with parents or carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Supporting admin staff in offering initial challenge and support when pupils are late or absent and working with key partners if attendance and/or punctuality becomes an issue.
- Monitoring attendance data and ensuring the Head teacher receives this information every half term.
- Providing attendance “watch” lists to school administrators for daily monitoring.
- Coordinating daily punctuality checks with late pupils.

Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents/carers regarding absence.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance under the direction of the Headteacher.

Parents/Carers

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 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 (for example, an appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised. (See below)
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child’s reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Local Authority Access and Inclusion Officer

Our LA provides us with an Access and Inclusion Officer, whose job it is to:

- Enforce the law regarding school attendance.
- Support our whole school response to attendance through regular meetings, monitoring of individual pupil’s attendance, and support with specific attendance, access, or inclusion issues as they arise.

Registration

All the school doors open at 8.45am until 9.00am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.05am and by 1.20pm.

All attendance records are documented using ScholarPack software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 9.00am, the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 9.00am will be marked as late in the attendance record.

Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness, parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence. All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer system.

It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we will attempt to contact parents to request these details. If this is not possible, or an answer is not returned by a specified date, then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

First Day Calling

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day calling procedure. Please see our First Day Calling procedure for full details of the procedures.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where, over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

Leaves of absence during term time

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time and parents or carers must apply to school for a leave of absence.

The Department for Education allows a Head teacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time only in 'exceptional circumstances'. They do not clearly define this for schools, but we are required to consider each application individually taking account of the specific facts and circumstances, and relevant background context behind the request.

Parents and carers must complete a 'Leave of Absence' form (Appendix 1) outlining in writing the exceptional circumstances for the request. A paper copy of the form can be obtained from the Key Stage 2 admin office. The form must be returned to school for a decision at least 2 weeks before the first day of leave requested (except for a bereavement or other serious family emergency). The Head teacher may invite you to attend a meeting to discuss your request.

We define exceptional circumstances as an event or problem which a parent or carer cannot control or did not expect.

No holidays taken during term time will be authorised unless an exceptional circumstance *also* applies.

Valid reasons for applying exceptional circumstances and allowing an authorised absence *may* include:

- Being too unwell or infectious to be in school, medical or dental appointments, or an absence from school recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from physical or mental ill-health or injury.
- The school site, or part of it is closed due to an unavoidable cause when it should be open.
- Transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within safe walking distance (2 miles measured by the nearest available safe route for a child aged 7 and under and 3 miles for children aged 8 and over).
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel or daily activities which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- Service personnel close to the family returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be able to take leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- Bereavement or unexpected and serious personal or family problems.
- To attend the wedding of a person close to the family – up to 1 day.

Reporting

A child's attendance record is published on our school's report cards for parents, in the end of year report to parents and sometimes at the request of staff, parents and relevant external agencies at various points throughout the year.

Pupil attendance figures are included each term in the Headteacher's report to the Local Governing Board. Aggregate attendance data is submitted to the Department for Education at the requested times each year. The results of this census, showing the school percentage for overall levels of attendance and unauthorised absence, is then subsequently published on the internet as part of school performance tables and within the annual data for the school known as ASP.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The government and the school expect attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly.

In primary school, we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore, where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed of our concerns.

95% - 100%	Good Attendance
90% - 95%	School are monitoring attendance
Less than 90%	Referral to attendance panel

If attendance is 90 – 95% the Headteacher will review the child's attendance history and, depending on the outcome, may wish to discuss the attendance with you as parents to see how we could support you in improving it.

If attendance is <90% then the attendance will be reviewed by a panel of senior members of staff; the panel will wish to meet with parents to see how we, the school, can support improvements.

If improvements do not follow the attendance panel review, then the case will be referred to the Inclusion officer with Cumbria LA.

The Inclusion Officer can support families to improve attendance and can also seek hearing for prosecution.

Appendices

1. Letter/Request for leave form including response
2. Letter in response of holiday taken during term time
3. Standard letter requesting presence at a review meeting
4. Standard letter explaining concerns RE attendance



FAIRFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gallowbarrow
Cockermouth
Cumbria
CA13 0DX

Head teacher: Mr C Steele
Telephone: 01900 821133
Fax: 01900 821132
E-mail: head@fairfieldprimary.co.uk
Web: www.fairfieldprimary.co.uk

Dear Parents/Carers,

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. The Department for Education allows a Headteacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time only in "exceptional circumstances".

Any absence from school will disrupt your child's learning. Please consider writing to your MP to campaign for the cost of holidays during authorised dates to be the same price as holidays taken during term time.

You may consider that a holiday will be educational but your child will still miss out on the teaching that their peers will receive whilst your child is away. Children returning from a leave of absence during term time are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed. Teachers then have to give more time to help individual children catch up on missed work. This poses a potential risk of the under achievement for your child and other students in the class. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

Please request a leave of absence by completing the form on the reverse of this notification. If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence this **will be recorded as unauthorised leave**.

All unauthorised absences, including holidays that have not been sanctioned by the headteacher, are accumulated and parents who fail to ensure regular attendance of their children at school can be referred to the Local Authority.

All leave of absence requests must be completed on the attached form. This should be returned to the school at least 7 days before the start of the holiday. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

In considering the decision whether to authorise, the following will be taken into account:

- Reasons given for the holiday;
- Your child's previous attendance record; this includes attendance in the current academic year - which should be over 95% - as well as attendance in previous academic years.
- Whether your child will miss any tests/examinations (or important preparation for their tests)
- Whether your child is making good progress.

I hope you will support our efforts to raise attendance and attainment at our school.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Pupil NameClass

Date of first day of absenceam or pm

Date of return to schoolam or pm

Number of school days that your child will be absent from school

Please detail the exceptional circumstance for which you are requesting leave of absence

[Empty box for detailing exceptional circumstances]

I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the local authority may be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Name(s) of Parent/Carer (s) making application.

Dr/Mr/Mrs/ Ms Forename..... Surname

Dr/Mr/Mrs/ Ms Forename..... Surname

Signed Dated

(Please ensure you are giving at least 7 days' notice of the proposed absence, retrospective applications cannot be authorised)

For school to complete: AUTHORISED UNAUTHORISED a) b) c) d) (refers to categories below)

⌘-----

This slip to be returned to parents

Fairfield Primary School - Request for a Leave of Absence During Term Time

Dear.....,

Child's Name..... Class.....

Your request for absence on the following dates: ___ / ___ / ___ to ___ / ___ / ___ =.....days, has been

considered and is AUTHORISED UNAUTHORISED

- a) Their attendance is currently.....
- b) The request **does / does not** meet the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances'
- c) They are **making / not making** good progress towards their end of year targets.
- d) They **are / are not** being prepared for or taking statutory tests during the absence

Please note: An **unauthorised** absence may be reported to the Local authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued

Signed _____ Head Teacher _____ Date ___ / ___ / ___



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Head teacher: Mr C Steele
Telephone: 01900 821133
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Web: www.fairfieldprimary.co.uk

Dear Parents/Carers,

Thank you for informing us of your intention to remove _____ from school for a holiday in (date), totalling __ days.

The Department for Education allows a Head Teacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time, only in 'exceptional circumstances'. From what you have told us, there are no exceptional circumstances for the holiday, therefore we are unable to authorise the absence.

Our school, whilst acknowledging that each family's circumstances are different, is dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believes regular attendance through the year is essential to every child's success.

If you take your child on a term-time holiday, they will miss out on the teaching that their peers will receive whilst your child is away. Children returning from a leave of absence during term time are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed.

Failing to ensure regular school attendance by taking your child out of school in term time for a holiday is an offence under section 444 (1) or section 444 (1A) of the 1996 Education act. The maximum penalty for these offences is a fine of £2,500, 3 months' imprisonment or both. Alternatively, the Local Authority/School may choose to impose a Section 444A Penalty Notice in the order of a fine instead of prosecuting for the offences given above. The amount of the penalty notice is £60.00 (per parent, per child) if paid within 21 days. If paid after 21 days but within 28 days the penalty notice is doubled to £120.00 (per parent, per child). Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will result in prosecution except in limited circumstances.

Yours sincerely

Mr. C. Steele

The following can be added for repeat holidays:

This is the time that has had unauthorised absence due to holidays in term time (Then detail each holiday, giving academic year and number of days holidays). Due to this I must now inform the Local Authority.



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Private & Confidential

Dear Parent/Carer,

In accordance with our attendance policy, we recently held a review of attendance across the school.

During the analysis of data, we found that 'PUPIL NAME''s attendance is currently ??%.

We would like to invite you to attend a meeting in school with regards to the attendance record so we can discuss how we can work together to support and improve NAME's attendance.

Please can you attend a meeting at Fairfield Primary School (Key Stage 2 Reception) on DAY, DATE, YEAR at TIME.

If you are not available to meet at this time, please contact the school office to rearrange.

The meeting will be chaired by Mr. C. Steele (Headteacher) and/or Mr. J. Gale (Deputy Headteacher).

Yours sincerely

Mr. C. Steele



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During the analysis of data, we found that 'PUPIL NAME''s attendance is currently ??%.

As stated within the school's attendance policy, children will have their attendance monitored in school should it fall below 95%. Of this absence ??% is 'authorised' and ??% is 'unauthorised'

We, as a school, are strictly monitored on procedures related to attendance and punctuality of children and are required, by law, to ensure that we provide appropriate support.

If you require any support with your child's attendance, then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Mr. C. Steele