

Fulwell Junior School

Attendance Policy

Parents of compulsory school age children have a legal duty to ensure their children

receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise than at a school (this

includes home education). If a child is registered at school, parents have the legal responsibility for

ensuring that their child attends regularly. Should a child fail to attend regularly legal action may be

taken against the parents under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

Education Law defines a \*parent\* as:

∙ 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 on a daily basis.

It is important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the child, that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the education of all pupils. Fulwell Junior Schools ethos demonstrates that children feel that their presence in school is important, that they are missed when they are absent or late. Appropriate action will be taken when necessary in order to promote the aims of the policy.

**Objectives**

● To maximise attendance of all children. With a target of at least 96% of all children.

● To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.

● To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.

● To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice.

● To work closely and make full use of the support of the wider community including the Education Welfare Service and multi-agency teams.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

**Local Governing Bodies (LGB)**

● To monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.

● To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

**Headteacher**

● To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil and group and whole school attendance patterns.

● To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.

● To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and / or punctuality is an issue.

● To provide LGB with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and

practice.

● To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child’s attendance. To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.

● By communicating with parents about homework through Parent evenings, reports, newsletters etc. Keeping parents informed of children’s progress, projects, topics to be studied and targets, which have been negotiated.

**Teacher**

● To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.

● To respond promptly to any issue raised in the weekly analysis of registers by Office Staff.

● To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be

absent for an extended period through sickness.

**Office Staff**

● To accurately prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of SIMS for recording pupil attendance.

● To record the reasons for absence given to them using the appropriate code.

● To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary, including referral to LA.

● To contact parents/carers on the first day of their child’s absence to establish the reason if they have not been contacted by a parent to provide a reason for absence.

● To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each week. To make a judgement in conjunction with the Headteacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

● To flag up to Headteacher any child who is absent who is subject to a child protection or team around the child procedures or any other child who the Headteacher has concerns about. The Headteacher will identify the children who they wish the office to identify.

**Parents / Carers**

● Ensure regular and punctual school attendance.

● To inform the school by 9.10am if their child is sick or away from school for any reason for each day that they are absent. This is especially important as the school is legally required to report reasons for absence. The school will contact parents if no notification has been received and may contact the Local Authority Attendance team or social care if there are concerns around a child’s whereabouts.

● Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.

● To inform the school in advance and show the school the appointment card/letter/text upon first notification from the relevant organisation, i.e Dentist,Doctors e.t.c

● Where a child has to be collected during the school day, they must be collected from theschool office by arrangement with the office staff. Children cannot be allowed to meet parents / carers off school property and they must be picked up by an adult.

● Only request leave of absence if it is for exceptional circumstances.

● Actively work with the school staff, attendance officer and relevant multi agency staff to solve any attendance issues as and when they occur.

**CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN/LOOKED AFTER**

Where the school has concerns about a child’s attendance, they will notify Children’s services and report the concern to the identified person for the child immediately. If the family cannot be contacted that day, a home visit may be made by the attendance officer at the earliest opportunity.

**ADMINISTRATION**

Under the 2006 Education Regulations it is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day

● The School uses the School Information Management System to store and monitor its legal responsibilities in relation to attendance.

● Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions.

● Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil’s attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

**ABSENCE ILLNESS**

Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence and where possible on each subsequent day of absence. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not itself authorise an absence. It is for the school to determine if an absence is to be authorised (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

● Where Office Staff are not made aware of the reason for a child’s absence they will, wherever possible, contact parents/carers on the first day of absence.

● If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Headteacher should be informed.

**MEDICAL OR DENTAL APPOINTMENTS**

● Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.

● Where absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment cannot be avoided, this may be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments and also bring their child into school either before or after the appointment so that full sessions are not missed.

**HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

Time off school for family holidays cannot be authorised. The Headteacher has the discretion, in exceptional circumstances, to authorise short periods of time off school. If a parent / carer considers that they have circumstances that may be deemed exceptional, they should make a request in writing to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will then reply in writing to inform whether the request has been granted.

Fulwell Junior School will monitor all absences during term time and challenge those parents that do not adhere to the legislation. Any unauthorised absence will be dealt with through nonattendance procedures. Other absences form school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made to decline or authorise the absence.

**LATENESS**

∙ Children arriving any later than school start time will be marked as ‘L’. Significant lateness (over 30 mins) will be marked as ‘U’ and the associated session deemed missed. A ‘U’ mark is an unauthorised mark and as such me be used to refer a child who meets the threshold for referral to the local authority.

∙ Pupils arriving late must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded.

∙ Regular reviews of punctuality take place. Any irregular pattern will result in intervention to address the matter via a letter informing parents of the problem, a meeting in school, a home visit by our attendance officer and regular reviews thereafter.

**CHILD MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

It is a statutory requirement on all local authorities to identify any children who are missing from education. Any child or young person who is missing out on their educational entitlement raise concerns as they are not only missing out on opportunities to learn which could have an impact on their attainment but also their it can raise concerns about their safety and welfare. As a school, we proactively encourage parents / carers and staff to share information they may have regarding children who they think or know are missing from education, to ensure we can make sure they are safe and are registered at school or an alternative educational provision as soon as possible. Children who are missing from education are children or young people of compulsory age (aged 5-16) who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

Children go missing from education for a number of reasons, some of which include:

● They don’t enter the educational system at the appropriate time

● They are removed from the educational system by their parents

● They don’t attend due to illness or issues following exclusions or refusal to come to school

● They fail to find a suitable place within an educational setting after to moving to a new area It

is important that information about a child who could be missing from education is shared so

that the school and attendance team can make sure that appropriate provisions can be put

into place ensuring the safety and wellbeing of child or young person. The school will follow

procedures detailed in the Sunderland City Council document ‘Locating Missing Pupils and the

removal of pupils from roll’.

**REPORTING TO PARENTS AND CARERS**

The school will raise the awareness of the implications of poor school attendance through:

∙ Newsletters and the school website

∙ Parents Evenings

∙ Transition Meetings

∙ Rewarding good attendance and punctuality

∙ Periodically reminding parents of the School's procedures for notification of absences.

The School will actively pursue “truancy” whether it is intentional on the part of the child or is

condoned by parents [i.e. unauthorised absence]. If the School has evidence of truancy, the

Headteacher will confirm the absence as “unauthorised” to the parents in writing. The procedure

outlined below is a staged response to irregular school attendance and poor punctuality. The School

works hard to regularly monitor attendance and punctuality. It is hoped that problems about

attendance can be resolved swiftly. Concerns raised about a child’s absence are discussed.

Information is shared openly and reasons for absence are discussed. All absences both authorised,

unauthorised absence and lateness will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of each term and

the end of the academic year within their child’s report.

In order to give parents/carers a benchmark to their child’s attendance against national

indicators, the following grades will be used:

100% Excellent Action

99.9% - 98% Very Good

97.9% - 96% Good

95.9% - 95% Satisfactory Monitor

94.9% - 93% Requires Improvement

Under 92% Poor Action Needed

**PROCEDURES THE SCHOOL WILL USE TO FOLLOW UP IRREGULAR/NON ATTENDANCE**

Fulwell Junior School rigorously monitors attendance.

Any child who is below 92%, or has unauthorised absences, has their attendance monitored until the end of the school year.

Any child whose attendance is 92% or below at the end of a school year, will be monitored from the outset of a new school year.

The Headteacher will know of any mitigating circumstances, such as serious medical conditions, that have led to low attendance and will be mindful of this situation when flagging children to commence non-attendance procedures. At any time in the school year, where there are concerns around a child’s attendance, a Parent Meeting may result in a contract/agreement being developed to address attendance issues.

Any pupil with patterns of irregular attendance i.e. incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; periods of extended absence; periods of un-authorised absence, etc., will begin formal Non-Attendance proceedings as detailed below.

At any point during this procedure a parent / carer may be notified that the School will no longer authorise a child’s absence without legitimate medical proof which validates the reason for absence provided.

**NON-ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

STAGE 1

Any pupil whose attendance falls below 92% may be sent a concern letter from the School. A copy of this letter should be held by the School. The child will be set a target for improvement over a fourweek period. If the child’s attendance does not improve and the child does not meet the target, the

Headteacher decides whether to continue to monitor the child under stage 1 procedures or whether

it is necessary to progress the child to Stage 2 procedures.

STAGE 2

Parents and/or carers will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher and a member of the local

Governing body, to discuss reasons for absence and any support required to facilitate an improvement.

STAGE 3

Attendance continues to be a concern and the attendance target set at stage 2 has not been met. A

further meeting will be held with the head of school and a member of the Local Governing Body.

STAGE 4

Attendance continues to be a concern and a referral to the City of Sunderland Attendance team is

made The City of Sunderland Attendance Team will review the attendance and may issue a Fixed

Penalty Notice.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICE

A Fixed Penalty Notice may include absence for a leave of absence in term time, including holidays,

regardless of whether or not an official request has been made. Full information and guidance on Fixed Penalty Notices can be found on the City of Sunderland website.

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance.

This policy will be reviewed from time to time following guidance or regulations set from DfE or whenever Fulwell Junior School determines that changes need to be made.