



FARNEY CLOSE SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Signed	
Role	Principal
Date Approved	

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We strongly believe that for young people to work towards meeting their full potential, it is vital that they have a well-ordered and stable environment. We feel that this is best achieved through a consistent approach when working with the young people, accomplished through routines, repetition and reinforcement, and opportunities to review and learn from situations. For this to happen, it means that young people at the school are given choices through which they learn to develop responsibility and independence skills. For us to achieve all this it is vital that children's attendance is high else they will not receive the academic and social learning to help them achieve their potential.

For a child to reach their full educational potential we expect all pupils to have 100% attendance. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Reporting absence

It is the parent/carer responsibility to inform the school on each day of pupil's absence by phoning the main school number 01444 881811. They also need to explain why their child will be absent from school.

3.2 Attendance register

The attendance register, which must have all pupils on it, will be taken at the start of every lesson. Tutor times (am and pm) are where attendance percentages are taken from. Each lesson will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Authorised Absent
- Unauthorised Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- In school but not in lesson, for example unwell on House, in a meeting or therapy.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The attendance is recorded on the schools Management Information System (iSams) by teachers at the start of every lesson.

3.3 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). They must phone the school and inform the Receptionist or a member of the Senior Leadership Team of the reason why their child is unable to attend school

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.4 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance to the Principal. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.5 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

3.6 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.7 Reporting to parents/carers

Parents/Carers will be formally notified of their child's attendance at the end of each term as part of their termly report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Principal cannot grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Farney Close will actively work with parents / carers to ensure that their child has good attendance at school. Due to the distance involved with the children attending our school we will offer a variety of support strategies such as letters identifying attendance figures and sharing expectations, phone contact, home visits (dependent on distance), liaising with the relevant professions that support that family, meetings at school or at the LEA offices.

Termly congratulation post cards are sent to the homes of all pupils that meet or exceed 95% attendance.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents / carers are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Weekly attendance and referrals meetings take place between the Referrals and Inclusion Officer, the School social worker and members of the School Leadership team. All children and young people whose attendance falls below 90% are discussed and action agreed.

The Referrals and Attendance Officer and/or the child's Link Worker keep in regular contact with the family of the absent pupil. We will consider involving the pupil entitlement team from West Sussex in attendance does not improve and there is no relevant reason for them to be absent. The school's first referral goes to West Sussex as this is where the school is situated even if the child's home is in a different Local Authority.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. The Referrals and Inclusion Office will send out letters to parents and carers if attendance falls below 90% with a copy sent to the pupils local authority to keep them informed.

Pupil absence data is collected each term. Individuals attendance is tracked and where concern is highlighted the relevant intervention and support is put in place to support their attendance in increasing.

For further information re Farney Close reporting school absences to West Sussex please follow link https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/12459/cme_policy.pdf

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 Attendance monitoring

The Referrals and Inclusion Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Principal when to issue warning letters

7.4 Form tutors

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a twice daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via the schools Management Information System.

7.5 School's Receptionist

The School's Receptionist is expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
K	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
Q	COVID	Have tested Positive to COVID
p	Pending	COVID test result
9	Placement ended	Terms trial not completed.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to general circumstances
A	Other authorised circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances e.g. bereavement.
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

Code	Definition	Scenario
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day