

FAIRWAY INFANT SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

November 2018



Adopted by the Curriculum Committee
At their meeting on 20th November 2018
Review date November 2019

Key Principles

By law, parents are required to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are registered at school and attend regularly & punctually. Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn or has a day of religious observance or a failure of Local Authority transport.

- A child who is not in school is missing out on part of their education.
- A child who arrives late for school is missing out on a very important part of the school day, often including setting the scene for the day's activities.

No absence during term time will be authorised unless the request is exceptional or there are clear and demonstrable educational benefits.

Our aim is for the highest level of attendance possible and for all absences to be explained with acceptable reasons.

Pupils attend school for 190 days each year.
This leaves 175 other days each year for holidays and other activities.
80% attendance = 1 day off per week.
90% attendance = 1 day off per fortnight.
10 days absence each year = ½ a term of schooling time at Fairway

It is vital that parents/carers and schools work together. We follow the West Sussex guidance which sets out the following principles:

- All registered pupils should attend school regularly and punctually.
- All children, irrespective of individual circumstances, should have an equal opportunity to attend school regularly.
- The school and the Local Authority, together with any external agencies, will work together with the parents or carers for the best interests of pupils.
- The school's expectations of regular attendance will be made clear from the outset.
- Where necessary, intervention and enforcement measures will be taken, especially with regard to unauthorised absences and lateness.

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

Children of compulsory school age are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence.

There are two types of absences:

- Authorised (Where the school approves pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (Where the school does not approve of absence)

Arrival and registration

School begins at **8.55 am**. The gates to the school are open from **8.40 am** and the children can enter the building from **8.45 am**. Parents are responsible for supervising their children until the doors open at 8:45. Children are expected to be in their classroom by **8.55 am**. Any child arriving later than this should enter the school by the main

entrance. A reason for the lateness should be given and this will be recorded in the register. If a child arrives after 8:55 they will be marked in as **Late**. After 20 minutes, ie, 9.15, this will become an **Unauthorised Absence**.

The school office checks the Registers every morning and will contact the parents of any child recorded as absent with no reason having been given to the school.

The afternoon register is taken at 1pm.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in/out register in the office is used in the case of fire as an appendix to class registers.

Registers are checked by the Education Welfare Officer to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and frequency of any absences and lateness.

Reporting absences

- It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to inform the school as early as possible, and by 9:15 at the latest, on the first day of the child's absence. Parents/carers may either phone, speak to a member of staff or send a written message.
- If no contact has been received from parents/carers, the school office will phone them on the first day of absence.
- If the child is ill then the school should be notified of the nature of the illness, and if possible, the expected date of return. If parents/carers find it difficult to send their children to school because of personal problems or the children are reluctant to attend because of a home or school problem then parents/carers should contact the school or the Education Welfare Officer.
- If parents/carers fail to notify the school then it is the school's responsibility to find out the reason for the absence. The school has a process of several steps starting with contacting the parents through to involving the EWO and contacting the police to request a Welfare Call. The school records each step in this process.

Medical appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason the child should return to school directly after the appointment.

The school office should be informed by 9:15 on the first day of a child's absence, be it through illness or any other valid reason. Parents do not need to ring each day of an absence due to illness, unless there are changes in the child's condition. If an absence continues into a new week parents should ring the school on the Monday of the new week.

Sudden, serious circumstances do occur, rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be written in the register.

Applications for Authorised Absence

The school will not authorise holidays. Parents who decide to take a holiday during term time, will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on a child's record and are monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Officer, and could result in court action.

If a parent needs to remove their child from learning they must complete the school's "Request for Absence" form which must be signed by both parents and accompanied by a letter from your employer if appropriate. Parents can also write to the school (or arrange a meeting with the Headteacher) to explain the exceptional circumstances for this request.

Penalties for Unauthorised Absence (*introduced by West Sussex*)

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) are fines issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised absence in line with current legislation.

Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued when;

- A pupil has unauthorised absence for over 10 school sessions (one school session equates to one morning or one afternoon) in any 10 week period
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register closes (8.50 am)
- For an unauthorised holiday (for more than 5 days)

For any of the above circumstances a formal warning will be issued in writing by the school. Following this warning parents/carers will be given the opportunity to work with the school to improve attendance.

However if the pupil's attendance does not improve the case will be referred to the LA. A fine may be issued. Fines will be:

- **£60 per parent** per child if paid within 28 days
- **£120 per parent** per child if paid after 28 days

(This does mean each parent in a 2 parent family)

A more detailed leaflet explaining Fixed Penalty Notices is available from the office.

Monitoring Attendance

Information from the school database is used to monitor attendance.

If there is a concern about a child's attendance, the headteacher will notify parents/carers.

Patterns of absence or lateness or other concerns are shared with the Education Welfare Officer, who visits the school to check attendance records and discuss any problems. The Education Welfare Officer is available to support parents/carers who may be having difficulties in ensuring that their children attend school regularly. Fixed Penalty notices may be issued, and where necessary, legal action may be taken. Parents will be provided with the WSCC leaflet 'A brief guide to fixed penalty notices' which is also available from the WSCC website.

At the end of each week attendance is reviewed and the class with the best attendance is given a certificate and our "Attendance Bear" to be kept in their classroom for the week. Similarly the class who were most punctual receive a certificate and our "Punctuality Puppy". At the end of each term children with 100% attendance receive a certificate.

Procedures and Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors are responsible for:

- monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis.
- holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school.
- monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- sending out individual attendance statistics to parents/guardians at the end of each term.
- celebrating individual excellent attendance at the end of each term (attendance certificate).
- celebrating most improved attendance at the end of each term
- supporting other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Teachers are responsible for:

- recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.
- returning registers to the office when not in use and within 20 minutes of the start of the session.
- Parents/ guardians are informed if their child is developing a pattern of late arrival.

Office staff are responsible for:

- taking calls from parents about absence and recording it on the school system.
- phoning parents on the first day of their child's absence if no contact has been made.
- following the school procedure for finding out the reason for an absence.

Pupils will be responsible for:

- aiming to achieve excellent attendance.
- aiming to achieve most improved attendance.

Parents or Guardians are responsible for:

- ensuring good attendance.
- children arriving on time.
- informing the school by 9.15 am on the first day of non-attendance.
- bringing children in to school before/after a medical appointment whenever possible.
- trying to make appointments outside school time.
- completing In/Out book kept in the office, for a child taken home or brought into school during a school session.
- completing Unexplained Absence Form and return it to the school as soon as possible.
- discussing planned absences with the school in advance

- only applying for absence in term time for exceptional circumstances (a child's birthday is not exceptional circumstances).
- avoiding absence at the start of the academic year.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Adopted by the Curriculum Committee
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Signed.....

Date.....

Dharma Mahesan
Chair of Committee