



Attendance Policy

Scheme of Delegation	
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Staff Lead Reviewer:	Executive Headteacher
Assigned Governor	Valerie Harffey
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Introduction

Farnham Common Village Schools recognise that good attendance is essential to ensure progress and to enable children to reach their full potential.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

96%+	Excellent – Well done! This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.
94 – 95%	Average – Well done, strive to build on this.
90 – 93%	Causing Concern – School will start to monitor attendance, learning in school will start to become affected.
85 – 89%	Poor – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. Please work with the school urgently to improve the situation.
Below 85%	Unacceptable – Absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It IS affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. We will continue to work with you and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to improve your child's attendance.
Lateness	Any pupil's late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

2. Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and members of school staff. We will report to parents on attendance at the consultation meetings in Autumn and Spring and in the end of year report.

3. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity;
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

4. Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the case of any absence is always required.

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 guardian. 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. This includes:

- Illness (when parent/guardian has notified the school)
- Urgent medical or dental appointments
- Days of **approved** religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances – if approval has been given by the Headteacher
- Approved sporting/educational activity.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences that have not been properly explained.
- Looking after family members
- Birthday treats or trips/family celebrations
- Family holidays
- Extended weekends when children leave during school hours on a Friday afternoon and do not return until after school starts on the following Monday morning.

- No reason given for absence.
- Taking the child out of school when a previous request for absence has been declined by the Headteacher.
- Late – after the register has closed.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes

Traveller Absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. Traveller absence (Code T) is acceptable only when the family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When in or around Buckinghamshire, if a Traveller family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

FCVS will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily whilst away from their base school. In such cases, the pupil's school place at FCVS will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

FCVS can operate effectively as the child's base school only if we are engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

FCVS will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

The child is on roll and attending another visited school

- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as for any other pupil.

5. Absence Procedures

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

Contact us on the first day of absence before 9.15.

If your child is absent we will:

Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you and are concerned about the whereabouts of the child. If we cannot contact you we will ring the other contact numbers you have provided.

If we still cannot make contact with you we will make a home visit.

If we cannot get an answer from the home visit we refer immediately to children's services / MASH / Police and request a welfare call.

If your child's attendance is of concern or is persistently late we will write to you.

If your child's attendance falls below 85% we will refer the matter to the educationwelfare officer.

6. Arrival and Registration

Junior School

The playground is supervised from 8.30 am and a soft start operates from 8.40am where children start going into calls. The register is taken promptly at 9.00 am. The register is taken twice a day and each day counts as two sessions.

Infant School

The gate opens at 08.45am and the register is taken promptly at 9.00am. The register is taken twice a day and each day counts as two sessions.

If a child arrives after the close of registration period, he/she will be marked in as Late. After 9.30 a.m. if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause this will become an Unauthorised Absence. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided. The afternoon register is taken at 1.00 p.m (LKS2) and 1.30pm (UKS2). (Junior School) and at 1.00 p.m. (Infant School).

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal school hours are signed in or out from Reception. The signing in/out register is used in the event of an emergency/fire drill.

7. Requests for Leave of Absence

Head Teachers are no longer permitted to grant leave of absence for holidays in term time.

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** were updated on 1 September 2016.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers **may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

If you believe your circumstances are exceptional, please submit requests for leave of absence, in writing, to the Head Teacher.

8. Targets

Our school attendance averages at 95% and we target to keep it at this level. We know that good attendance is the key to successful learning.

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to highlight where improvements need to be made.

9. People Responsible for the Policy and its Implementation

FCVS believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

School staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions

- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated

Request that Parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Non urgent appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. should be made outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child away from school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Refrain from taking their child on holiday during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Head Teacher in advance of booking the holiday.

10. Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will be deleted from the register only when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the Local Authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- When a parent informs the school in writing that the pupil is to be withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days' continuous unauthorised absence have elapsed and both the Local Authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- A pupil has left the school but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil

FCVS will follow Buckinghamshire County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown

11. Using Attendance Data

All pupils' attendance will be monitored and will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Every half term the Attendance officer will provide all class teachers with attendance data for the previous five weeks for each pupil within their class. The list will be presented in numerical descending order with the highest attendees at the top;

This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1).

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

The Welfare Officer or School Business Manager will share attendance data with the Local Authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

12. Support Systems

FCVS recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce / separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

FCVS also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Friendship groups
- Reward systems
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

13. Legal Sanctions

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, FCVS will notify the Buckinghamshire Education Welfare Service of the irregular attendance.

The Education Welfare Service or school, may invite parents to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and issue a formal warning of a Penalty Notice.

Parenting Contracts (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between the Local Authority, school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should irregular attendance continue.

Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- Intervention has failed to bring about improvement and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.
- A pupil has taken leave of absence i.e. for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to avoid a prosecution. A £60 fine, per parent/carer, per child must be paid within 21 days. The fine increases to £120 per parent/.carer, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Prosecution: The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

14. Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Intervention Flow Chart

School will notify parent of the child's irregular school attendance and offer them the opportunity and support to improve.

If you receive a letter informing you of concerns regarding your child's attendance you should

- Speak with your child to see if there are any reasons why they are reluctant to attend
- Contact the school to discuss any difficulties you or your child may be experiencing.

If there is no improvement and the parent has not provided a good reason for the absence, the school may refer to the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service will invite you to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and may issue a Warning of a Penalty Notice.

A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between you and the Local Authority aimed at supporting you in improving your child's school attendance.

Whilst your involvement in a Parenting Contract is voluntary, if you fail to engage with the support offered and your child's attendance remains irregular, the Education Welfare Service may issue a Penalty Notice or begin legal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court.

If you are issued with a Penalty Notice of £60 per parent/carer, per child this must be paid in full within 21 days otherwise the Penalty will increase to £120 per parent/carer, per child. If you fail to pay the Penalty by the 28th day, the Education Welfare Service may instigate legal proceedings against you.