



And Farley Junior School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Whipperley Infant Academy and Farley Junior School Academy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Effective from 1st October 2020

SECTION 1 – ATTENDANCE POLICY

The law states that a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where he, or she, is a registered pupil

What is attendance?

We aim to ensure that all our children attend school regularly and on time. This will ensure that they are able to make the most of the educational experiences offered at Whipperley. We also aim to raise an awareness of the importance of attendance with our families and so improve the level of attendance.

Why is attendance at school so important?

Research and our own experience have shown that non attendance at school, even for short periods, has a negative impact on children's academic and social development. The future for young people is changing rapidly. Young people need to achieve higher educational levels than at any time in the past. Non-attendance at school, even for short periods, may jeopardise their future opportunities by limiting their educational experience. Regular attendance also sets in place good routines and habits for the future.

How the school will help to improve attendance:

We aim to improve the levels of attendance through continuing to:

- promoting a safe, caring and supportive school ethos
- provide a clean, attractive and welcoming physical environment
- promote a positive attitude towards school
- work to enable all children to feel secure and happy
- deal with any difficulties experienced by children in a positive manner and in line with our pastoral care strategies
- work to improve parental involvement
- monitor attendance regularly

We will use a variety of strategies which seek to raise levels of attendance and punctuality. These will include rewards for outstanding and/or improved attendance

Target Setting

Whipperley has high expectations and standards and the same should apply for attendance. Therefore, the school will adopt a target figure for attendance each year. **Please note: The overall school target will not be lower than a minimum 97% attendance.**

Equal Opportunities and Attendance

In circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend school help can be given in relation to catching up with work missed. However, as children learn through practical and 'hands-on' approaches, they need to be present in school to make the most of teaching and learning.

We can offer:

- for long absences, providing reading books and writing book to take away, and recommending workbooks to support English and Maths.
- teaching assistants and support staff providing individual attention where appropriate
- personal attention and encouragement from class teachers and other specified staff
- differentiation of tasks to best suit the needs of the individual pupil
- use of Family Workers to support the family

SECTION 2 – ATTENDANCE GUIDANCE

Parents' and Carers' Responsibilities

- Parents are by law required to make sure that their children who are on the school register attend school regularly and punctually
- Parents and Carers are responsible for letting the school know about any pupil absence on the first day of the absence
- If their child is not in school Parents and Carers should indicate when he/she is likely to return

Parents and Carers can inform the school of their child's absence by any other following methods:

- Telephone
- Personal contact
- Letter signed by parent, even if written by another family member

Protocol around COVID-19

- If your child has one or more of these three symptoms such as: a high fever/ new continuous cough and experiences a change or loss of smell and /or taste, please **keep your child off school and get a COVID 19 test**. While awaiting test results all household members should isolate and other children in your family kept off school. If your child tests positive you will be advised by the contact tracing team on isolation and testing for all your household. If the child that had symptoms tests negative they can return back to school and the rest of the family, no longer needs to isolate.
- **If your child does NOT have symptoms of COVID 19** however, has other cold like symptoms, such as a runny nose, they do not need to be tested and they do not need to isolate. Your child needs to come to school if they are well enough.

The school will try and help parents to maintain good attendance by administering prescribed or non prescribed medicines as per its school policy. If your child just has a snuffle, cough or slightly raised temperature then send them into school regardless with any medicine e.g. calpol and the school will monitor them throughout the day. Although we cannot keep children in school who obviously need care at home we are willing to give them a try. However, parents must be available should we need to contact them if the situation changes. Children may also return to school after a bout of sickness or diarrhoea after 24 hours.

School Procedures

The School uses attendance registers and electronic recording to store and monitor our legal responsibilities in relationship 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. Registers are recorded electronically onto the school's database.

The school operates first day calling. If no message has been received by 9.30 a.m. then office staff will telephone parents asking for an explanation as to the absence. If no response is received the absence is recorded as no reason given and will show as an unauthorised absence.

If any children are repeatedly absent from school without any communication from the parent, it is our policy to:

- Send letter to parent with a reply slip to enquire as to the reason for the absence.
- Follow up with phone calls if there is no response
- Make a home visit via the Family Workers or Education Welfare Officer (school's responsibility under Social Care procedures).

It is the parent's responsibility to keep the school informed of all absences.

Absence

Parents and Carers can be taken to court if they don't make sure their child attends school, without reason (as defined in law) and if the child has unauthorised absences.

It is the school's decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. **A note or telephone message from a parent will not count as an authorised absence if the reasons given are not acceptable to the school.**

The following table shows examples of authorised and unauthorised absences:

Examples of Authorised Absence:	Examples of Unauthorised Absence:
Illness, medical, dental appointment: provided the school is satisfied the illness and appointments are genuine	Where children are absent and no acceptable reason is given
Exceptional one off special occasions agreed in advance with the school as an authorised absence	Additional days taken for special occasions or days other than those specified by the school
	Shopping during school hours
	Going to the airport to meet or say goodbye to relatives
	Looking after brothers or sisters
An agreed period for family bereavement*	Absence for more than the agreed period
Religious observance days, the number and timing of which is determined by the school e.g. one day for each Eid [^]	Additional days taken other than those specified by the school
Off-site activities agreed by the school e.g. music exams, sporting events during school time	Attendance at any event without prior agreement with the school
Term time leave as agreed by the school in accordance with the guidance given in its Policy*	Term time leave without prior authorisation by the school
	Several medical related absences unsupported by medical notes and where attendance falls below 90%

~Authorised leave of absence for these situations may be considered by the Headteacher only in exceptional circumstances. Refer to '**Term Time Leave Policy**' for further guidance.

~The Governing Body in association with the Local Authority has decided that only religious festival days will be agreed (e.g. one day for each Eid festival) within a total of 2 days during the whole school year.

Lateness

- Pupils arriving ten minutes after their designated time, will be recorded as late
- Pupils arriving ten minutes after their designated time must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded.
- Pupils arriving after twenty minutes of their designated times will be recorded 'Unauthorised Late'. This will be considered an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given, for example a medical appointment. Lateness is monitored
- Action to address lateness will be taken in line with the school's strategy to improve punctuality. Parents will be asked to record the reasons for lateness onto the school's electronic database.
- We expect parents and carers to collect their children promptly at the end of the school day as it is upsetting for children if they do not. Children who are not collected within 10 minutes of the

end of the school day are brought to the school office and their names are recorded. The same procedures for late arrival are followed. After twenty minutes of their designated time if no contact has been made, arrangements will be put in place for the child to be sent to the After School Club (There will be a charge of £9.00 per session). If there has been no contact made with the school by the time of 4.30 p.m., then the school will contact Social Services to report an uncollected child.

Persistent lateness disrupts not only your child's education, but also that of the other children. Please note that when a child is late:

- It disrupts the learning of the other children
- Your child misses the crucial start to the lesson and doesn't understand the task set
- The Register has to be changed
- If your child has school dinner, the cook has to be informed of the change in numbers
- Children are often embarrassed or upset

Leave of Absence during term time

Children are expected to attend school for 190 days per year. However, the law gives discretionary power for schools to grant leave of absence in **extraordinary** circumstances; however, the school operates on strict procedures. Our policy is detailed in the Term Time Leave Policy

Sanctions:

Children and parents with attendance below 94% will receive a caution letter advising that their children's attendance could become a cause for concern. This will be held on file and must be signed by parents to say that it has been received and the implications noted.

Children and parents with attendance below 90% will receive a school interview letter for discussion as to the reasons for poor attendance and strategies for improving their child's attendance.

Children who regularly attend school with attendance >97% will receive rewards and certificates across the year.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

All schools are required by law to keep an attendance register and to mark any absence as either "authorised" or "unauthorised". Registers are taken twice per day; in the morning and at the start of the afternoon session. (If your child is absent for one day this means that they have missed two attendance sessions). We also must publish our attendance figures termly. These figures are recorded on every child's school report and in this way are reported to parents. Children's attendance records are also carried with them to their next class or school.

If parents are concerned about any school issues, including attendance, they are very welcome to come to meet with the Head teacher or see the class teacher. They may also ask to meet with the attendance officer or family worker.

Parents can be taken to court under the Education Act 1993 if they do not ensure that their child attends school without good reason (as defined in law) and if the child has had too many authorised absences.

Attendance Officer and Educational Welfare Officer

The School Attendance Educational Welfare Officer will check the school's register each half term. She will identify patterns or extended periods of absence. The school will send letters to parents expressing concern about the number and pattern of absences. Parents will be invited to make an appointment to discuss the cause of the absences with the Head Teacher.

Any child whose attendance falls below 90% over two consecutive half terms will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

The Educational Welfare Officer will send pre-court hearing letters to those parents whose children are persistently absent from school. Parents are requested to attend such meeting with the Educational Welfare Officer, Attendance Officer and the Head Teacher. At this meeting, strategies and targets for attendance will be agreed with parents. They will be monitored closely by the Head Teacher, Attendance Officer and the Educational Welfare Officer. Failing to comply with agreed strategies may result in parents being taken to court for failure to comply with the law.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices may be issued if your child has 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 12-week period from school. This includes situations where pupils are absent because of a term time holiday not authorised by the school. Please remember that 10 absences mean just one week's absence from school!

The school will send termly attendance reports to the DfE, and publish these figures in its prospectus and the Governors Report to Parents.

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