

FURROWFIELD SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



2016-2017

School Aim

At Furrowfield School, a single, simple global aim is pursued.

*To assist all pupils to achieve their fullest potential,
in all aspects of development,
in order that they may contribute more positively to the society, in which they live,
both now and in their future adult life.*

This is underpinned by the belief that pupils will
'progress through encouragement'

This policy has been written to work towards achieving that aim.

At all times the school will seek to promote,
amongst staff and pupils, as appropriate,
a sense of spirituality and wonder of the world about us
through the curriculum described in this and other policy documentation.

School Mission Statement

All members of staff, governors and teaching assistants accept responsibility for our pupils and are committed to meeting their pastoral, social and academic needs within a caring environment. This is an essential, integral part of the development of the whole school community.

All pupils are valued, respected and entitled to develop to his/her full potential, irrespective of need.

Aims

The aim of the Attendance Policy is to encourage pupils to attend school regularly. **Furrowfield School** expects pupils to attend regularly and punctually in order to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the 'Learning and Teaching' process and leads to educational and social disadvantage. It can also place children at risk and in some instances result in patterns of anti-social behaviour.

Furrowfield School sees the measuring of attendance rates as a key task and we believe that the goal of regular attendance should be pursued both in relation to individual pupils and the school as a whole. It is part of our responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously any problems which leads to non-attendance. In pursuing this aim, we see the need to work closely with parents/guardians who are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children attend school.

We believe that the greatest deterrent to truancy lies in the strength of our '**Home School Partnership**'.

Objectives

- To maximise pupils' learning opportunities;
- To maintain and improve upon levels of attendance;
- To involve parents and others in the pursuit of improved attendance;
- To monitor, evaluate and review the policy annually and in the light of other external factors, e.g. legislation.

Statutory Duty

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/guardians to ensure that their children receive efficient, full time education by regular attendance at school. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day – morning registration and afternoon registration.

The Headteacher's Responsibilities

- The school keeps up to date records on the attendance of all students.
- All students are registered twice a day to comply with regulations.
- Attendance percentages of individual students are used in academic reviews and written reports. Attendance statistics are reported to the Local Authority and the Governing Body.

The Responsibilities of the Parents/Guardians

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive an education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs that they may have.

The school expects parents to:

- **Ensure** that their children arrive at school on time, in full school uniform and in a condition to learn.
- **Instill** in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- **Impress** on their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- **Take** an active part in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and academic reviews.
- **Notify the school if their child is absent from school.** This should be done on the first day of absence. A full explanation of absence in writing is required on the child's return to school.
- **Avoid** arranging non-urgent medical/dental appointments during term time.
- **Not booking holidays during term time.**
- A register is taken every morning in tutor class by the class teacher and also in the first session after lunch.
- The teacher will mark students as present, absent or late students are not usually permitted to leave lessons.
- Students leaving a lesson for any reason should have the permission of the class Teacher
- Students who need to leave the school during the day, for medical appointments or other reasons are required to submit parental explanation or medical appointment card in advance. The student should then sign out at reception.

Lateness to School

All students are required to be in school by 8.50 a.m. Students arriving after 8.50 a.m. must report to, the main reception and sign the late book where they will be marked as "Late", registration closes at 9.45 students arriving after registration closes will be marked as "U" this is an unauthorised absence and will count towards students' overall percentage attendance.

Parents of students who are persistently late could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice by the local authority. Students who arrive after 9.00 a.m. will be sanctioned in accordance with the school Behaviour Policy unless they have an authorised explanation. Students who arrive late to school on a delayed Taxi service will not be recorded as late. This is not the case for students who travel by service bus or parental transport.

Absence from school

In line with new government regulations, ([The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)) leave of absence (including holidays) cannot be authorised during term time. In exceptional circumstances, a request may be granted by the Headteacher. Such requests must be made in writing well in advance of the absence. Absence taken without permission or if permission has been declined will be recorded as unauthorised and may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

Exceptional Circumstances

The legislation changes do not mean that an application for leave of absence cannot be granted by the Headteacher. The Headteacher has the discretion to grant leave if he/she believes that there are exceptional circumstances. The dictionary definition of exceptional is 'unusual' or 'rare.'

Best practice would be to ***avoid implementing blanket bans, which*** imply that the Headteacher would never authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday. Such a stance could be challenged by a parent, by way of judicial review. The statutory instrument gives Head Teachers discretion to grant leave, which should not be restricted by a blanket policy.

Best practice should be to look at each case on its individual merits; although it will be “exceptional” to authorise leave of absence, there may be circumstances where it would be right and reasonable to do so. The impact on the pupil’s welfare and attainment opportunities will be major considerations and the Headteacher will be guided by Student Support colleagues in this regard.

Whilst there is no legal guidance on what would constitute an ‘exceptional’ circumstance, below are the most common circumstances where Headteachers may consider reasons for leave of absence as ‘exceptional’ nationally. These examples are purely illustrative and not meant to be exhaustive. A Leave of Absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher’s discretion.

- Parental employment circumstances (e.g. service personnel).
- Compassionate circumstances (significant family illness, bereavement, funeral, family crisis).
- Other ‘one off’ unusual circumstances / events (prison visit, wedding).

The Headteacher may request supporting evidence from parents in order to verify reasons for requests, for instance, a letter from an employer or similar.

Circumstances that may not be considered ‘exceptional’:

- Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements.
- Days overlapping with the beginning or end of term.
- Birthday of pupil or family member.
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods.

First Day Absence Response

Parents/Carers should inform the school by **8.30 a.m.** if they know that their child will be absent on that day.

All attendance is monitored by the attendance officer. Parents of students where no parental contact has been made will receive a phone call / message asking them to reply whether they are aware of the child’s absence or not and to explain the reasons for their child’s absence. Absence without explanation is recorded as unauthorised.

Leaving school during the day

Students are expected to stay in school for the duration of the day unless they are authorised, by the Headteacher, to go home parents’ permission will be sought first.

If students need to leave school during the day (for any reason), they should bring in a note from their parents. This should then be signed by a member of the S.L.T. before they are authorised to leave. If a student fails to bring a note in to school, they will only be allowed to leave school if their parents inform the school by telephone.

Staged responses for pupils below government guidelines on attendance

- Stage 1: Letter sent to parents informing poor attendance
- Stage 2: Home visit by attendance officer (if no improvement in attendance)
- Stage 3: Meeting in school between governors, headteacher, parents and pupil
- Stage 4: Referred to E.W.O. service for legal proceedings to be commenced

Role of School Officers

- The Headteacher or her deputy , and the Attendance officer will meet regularly to:
- Identify students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Agree on focused, time-limited action, which needs to be taken by the school.
- Feedback and exchange information in relation to work undertaken.
- Identify areas of concern and of good practice in relation to attendance matters.
- Agree personalised strategies for improving attendance.

The Use of Legal Action

If a student fails to attend school regularly without a legitimate reason and the school has exhausted strategies to secure that student's return to regular attendance, the Local Authority will take legal action. A complaint may be made against the parents, in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Children Act 1996), or an educational supervision order relating to the student under Section 36 of the Education Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances are taken into account when considering legal action. **Fixed Penalty Notice** Parents who fail to respond to requests by the school to send their children to school or who take unauthorised leave of absence during term time or whose child arrives persistently late, may be issued with a fixed penalty fine by the Local Education Authority.

The notices will be issued at the discretion of the Headteacher. The fines will apply to cases where the parent/guardian is able but unwilling to ensure the attendance of the student.

A student of compulsory school age shall have his/her name deleted from the school admissions register when:

- The student is registered with us in accordance with the requirements of a School Attendance Order and another school is substituted by the LEA or if the order is revoked.
- The student is registered at another school.
- The school receives written notification from the parents that the child is receiving education somewhere else. The school's staff seek to establish the student's new address and place of education. The appropriate form is then passed to the Education Welfare Team.
- In the case of a student where leave of absence has been granted and the student has not returned to school within 10 school days, immediately following the last day of absence, which was granted, and we are satisfied that the student is not unable to attend school for illness or any other reason.
- The student has been absent for more than 4 weeks. The EWO and the school have failed to locate him/her after reasonable enquiry. We would send the appropriate form to the Education Welfare Team to enable them to try to trace the student.
- The student will cease to be of secondary school age before the school next meets and intends to cease to attend. (All registered students are required to remain at school until the leaving date). 'At school' includes for these purposes approved educational activities undertaken off site, including work experience.
- The student has had a permanent exclusion, which has been upheld.
- The student attends a special school and the LEA gives consent for his/her name to be removed.
- The student is absent from school for over 4 weeks because of detention in secure accommodation final court order or order of recall.

Promoting Attendance

- The school celebrates and rewards good attendance.
- The school has an Anti-bullying Policy designed to prevent behaviour, which hinders attendance.
- Students are regularly informed that bullying and aggressive behaviour is totally unacceptable. We have a climate in which bullying is reported immediately and dealt with.
- Students are expected to dress in accordance with the school uniform standards, take pride in themselves and their appearance.
- The school curriculum is continually reviewed to ensure that it is broad based, varied, challenging, differentiated and relevant to the needs of our students.
- The school will send letters to the parents of students with poor attendance. These letters will escalate in their seriousness.

Authorising Absence and Approved Educational Activity

The responsibility for authorising absences rests with the school. Written or verbal parental communication does not by itself constitute authorisation. The school may or may not accept the reason offered as valid. All absence notes are kept by the school. Where there are concerns, notes are kept until there is no longer a concern. Where a student has poor attendance, school may request to be provided with medical evidence in order to authorise an absence. Medical evidence will be scrutinised to ensure it is valid and appropriate before any absence is authorised. Policy revised July 2015

Do you know how many days *you* have been away from school this term?

Before the end of each term, each pupil will know which Zone you are in. It will depend on how many days you have been away from school.

Over 95% attendance puts you in the Green Zone. Well Done! This means that you are making the most of the opportunities on offer at school; you get the chance to join in as much as possible and make lots of friends.

You have the best chance of doing well at school because you do not miss any work and you get to do all the fun stuff too.

Under 95% but more than 85% attendance and you will be in the Amber Zone. Your attendance might be a little lower than the other children because you have been ill or have had a holiday during school-time. You do not want to miss out so try to come to school as much as you can. If you do, you will soon be into the GREEN ZONE.

If you have had a lot of time away from school, your attendance may be less than 85% and you could be in the RED Zone. If you're in the RED Zone, you could be missing lots of important and fun things at school. You could get into the AMBER ZONE if you tried really hard not to have a day off and came into school everyday, next term.

Summary

The ethos of the school is central to establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour. The staff group work hard to agree clear priorities and consistency.

By clearly setting out to pupils what is expected of them, pupils will be able to operate in a clear framework of what is acceptable in terms of behaviour attitude and activity. Staff set an example to pupils, both in the quality of their work and their high standards and expectations for themselves and their pupils. They also treat each other and the pupils with respect.

Furrowfield School continues to evolve and develop. We constantly assess, evaluate and put new procedures into practice. If we are to succeed in delivering a high quality education, we accept that we must be prepared to change and to adapt. This is perceived as a strength of the school.

We will continue to hold high expectations of pupils so that acceptable standards of behaviour are nurtured and developed in an empathetic and supportive educational environment that allows pupils to achieve academically and maximises their life chances.

This policy is reviewed annually.

Chair of Governor **Date**

Chair of School Council **Date**

Parent Governor **Date**

Headteacher **Date**