

Fairisle Infant and Nursery School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date policy reviewed: November 2019

To be reviewed again: November 2022

Ratified by Governing Body: 20.11.19

Signature: *astaphan*

ATTENDANCE POLICY

“Every child has the right to an education” Article 28 UNICEF Rights of the Child

This policy is in line with Southampton City Council's policy on attendance.

Aims

- To secure the full time attendance of every pupil to maximise opportunities for each pupil to fulfill his/her full potential academically and personally.
- To make attendance and punctuality part of the ethos of the school and a priority for all those associated with the school, including pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- To work with parents to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.
- To establish an effective system of rewards and sanctions.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To promote effective partnership with the Education Welfare Team and other agencies.
- To recognise issues for the broad range of specific pupil groups, e.g. disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and take account of them.

The role of Parents/Carers

- Parents have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to make sure that their children, of compulsory school age, attend the school they are registered at on a regular, full-time basis.
- It is an offence if a parent fails to secure a child's attendance and that absence is not authorised by the school.
- It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school if their child is going to be absent and to provide an explanation for the absence.
- Any problems over attendance should be discussed with the school at an early stage.

The role of the School

- Promote partnerships with parents to help children come to school willingly with a positive attitude (e.g. home visits, induction meetings and parent/teacher meetings)
- Monitor every pupil's attendance and to classify any absences as either authorised or unauthorised.
- Collate and analyse attendance data, including lateness, to identify trends and enable action to be taken.
- Set an absence target and review annually.
- Submit attendance data to the DfE for reporting purposes.
- Where concerns arise about a pupil's attendance / lateness, involve the Local Authority (Education Welfare Team).
- Report attendance levels to governors on a termly basis.

The school is in a federation of eleven other schools. The Attendance Leads meet once per term to evaluate attendance strategies and share information.

Attendance Report

Parents of children in Key Stage One and Year R receive an Attendance Report at the end of every term outlining their child's attendance.

The child's attendance report includes:

- The total number of sessions (half days) for the term;
- The total number of absences for each child for the term;
- The total number of authorised absences, and unauthorised absences if applicable;
- The total number of late attendances.
- The child's attendance is also included in the Annual Progress Report.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

The question of authorised and unauthorised absence is important and only the Headteacher, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents.

Authorised Absences are identified as:

- Sickness (if a child is absent for three consecutive days or more due to sickness, medical evidence will be required in order to authorise the absence)
- Medical/dental appointments (although parents are encouraged to make these appointments out of school hours if possible)
- Participation in an approved public performance
- Days of religious observance in the religious body in which parents belong
- Educated off site
- Exclusion
- Other situations in which schools may reasonably exercise discretion to grant leave, e.g. absence following the death of a close member of the family.

Application for Leave of Absence

In line with Southampton City Council's policy, governors have declared that:

- Term time leave of absence is not acceptable
- Family holidays during term-time is not acceptable
- The school cannot grant extended leave of absence, except in exceptional circumstances

Unauthorised Absences are those which the school does not consider 'reasonable' and for which no 'leave of absence' has been granted. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which are not properly explained
- Truancy
- Pupils arriving at school too late to be marked into the register (9.30am)
- Holidays during term-time for which no leave of absence has been granted.

Unexplained Absences

Where absence is not authorised, or a non-attendance is of concern, swift action will be taken to investigate and remedy the situation. All unexplained absences are classified as unauthorised (this may be amended to be authorised after investigation) and may result in a penalty notice from the Local Authority (see below). If a child is absent without the school being informed, the following procedure is set into action:

- The school will endeavor to contact parents using the 'Truancy Call' system.
- The school will write to parents requesting a reason for unexplained absence and will record the absence as unauthorised if a satisfactory reason is not given after one week.

- The school monitors absence / lateness of all pupils and will contact parents if levels of attendance / punctuality are a cause for concern. Details are given of the child's level of attendance and attention is drawn to possible legal action, e.g. penalty notice and/or referral to the Education Welfare Team.
- A meeting with the parent will be set up in school to explain the impact of poor attendance on progress and learning and to establish if there are any underlying reasons for persistent absences.
- Parents are encouraged to talk to the Headteacher and/or the School Nurse if they have any concerns regarding their child's medical fitness for school.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and will automatically be referred to the Education Welfare Team where the absence has been recorded as unauthorised. Any attendance below 90% is discussed with the Education Welfare Officer and the parents are duly informed.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully including academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

Lateness

Lateness may be classified as unauthorised unless there is a good reason. If however a pattern of lateness starts to emerge, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the Headteacher in order to reach a satisfactory solution. The school policy is to encourage punctuality and actively discourage lateness as it can seriously impact on pupil progress and disrupt lessons. If a child is late and misses registration (i.e. after 9.00 am), a late mark will be recorded as 'Late for session'. After 9.30 am registration is formally closed and a late mark is recorded as 'Unauthorised'. Where a situation at home makes it difficult for a pupil to arrive on time, consideration is given to an appropriate referral to an outside agency and advice may be requested from the Education Welfare Team.

Penalty Notices

The Local Authority may issue a penalty notice for unauthorised absence or late arrival in line with Section 7 of the Education Act 1996. Payment of a penalty notice within 21 calendar days of issue is £60 per parent and payment after this time but within 22 to 28 calendar days of £120. Failure to pay will normally lead to prosecution.

Appendix 1: Registration Good Practice

Keeping the Register

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It will also contribute data to pupils' Attendance reports and Annual Progress Reports.

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial if poor attendance and punctuality are to be tackled. It is vital that pupils and parents are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day.

Marking the Register

- No pupils should be marked present unless the teacher is certain that they are in school when the register is called.
- Doors to classrooms open at 8.55 am and are closed at 9.00 am. Between 9.00 am and 9.30 am children are recorded as 'late for session'.

Computerised Registration

The school uses a computerised registration system through 'SIMS' (School Information Management System). SIMS is implemented and supported by the Local Authority and provides a means to access accurate information relating to individual pupils as well as whole school attendance as follows:

- Absences are coded, allowing the user to produce accurate reports identifying patterns and trends in authorised and unauthorised absence. This includes medical appointments, illness, and lateness.
- Individual registration reports and group reports can be produced at any time and includes information on total percentage of absence.
- Individual reports are provided to the Headteacher to inform decision making with regard to requests for leave of absence.
- Statutory returns are electronically produced on request from the DfE for data analysis and national statistics.
- Class reports are produced on a weekly basis and an award is presented in Achievement Assembly to the class with the highest percentage attendance.

Registers are always available for inspection by the Education Welfare Officer. Regular meetings are arranged between the Headteacher, Attendance Officer and EWO to discuss concerns related to attendance matters. Issues raised will be dealt with in accordance with the service level agreement between the Education Welfare Team and the school.

Reviewed: November 2019
Next review: November 2022