



# Fairfield Infant and Nursery School

## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## ATTENDANCE MATTERS!

At Fairfield Infant and Nursery School we believe that good attendance and punctuality are essential if children are to take full advantage of school and gain educational and social skills that will equip them for life. We are committed to working hard to support all their families to ensure that all children have good attendance. We aim to provide an environment where all children feel valued and welcome, and to work in close partnership with parents and carers in ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance. Our school aims to keep attendance at 96% or above.

### Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of, and clear about, the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- provide clear definitions for absence categories.
- detail our policies and procedures for supporting attendance.
- explain what we expect families and school staff to do.
- explain the processes for when attendance is poor.

### Definitions

### Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

*Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parent, an absence will be unauthorised.*

### Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, even if the absence is supported by the parent.

## Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Whole class award for best attendance each half-term.
- Individual rewards for best attendance, and most IMPROVED attendance, each half-term.
- Greeting children and parents positively every morning.
- Putting in place supportive strategies such as reward charts where we notice a child is struggling to enter school.
- Meet and Greet with a key adult for some individual pupils.
- Breakfast provided for all pupils.

The Attendance team meet each half term to look at individual children's attendance. Children whose attendance is at 95% or below are identified, and parents are informed of our concerns via email. CPOMs is used as a source of information to identify reasons for absence, and this is acknowledged in the email. A monitoring period of four weeks is set, and parents are informed of this and offered support from our Family Support Worker. At the end of the four-week period, attendance is analysed again. Where there has been a significant improvement, parents are congratulated, and no further support is required. The child's name remains on the monitoring schedule to ensure

potential subsequent periods of poor attendance are linked. If attendance does not improve during the monitoring period, then families are invited to attend a meeting and support is offered. An Early Help Assessment may be offered if appropriate, or parents may be fined.

### Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

*The Designated Safeguarded Lead runs the Attendance panel, sends letter and organises attendance meetings as necessary.*

*The DSL analyses attendance data and takes actions informed by this.*

*Our Family Support Worker will offer personalised support as required.*

*The DSL and/or Family Support Worker will open an Early Help if applicable and if parents are in agreement.*

#### Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- speaking directly to parents about concerns around attendance.
- raising concerns with the DSL.
- supporting pupils to be positive about attending school. This may require an individual approach such as sticker charts or class jobs.

#### Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- overseeing the work of the DSL and Family Support Worker.
- attending some Attendance meetings where required.
- working with the DSL to identify proactive and reactive strategies to support attendance.

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#### Administration staff

Administration staff are responsible for:

- recording reasons given by parents for non-attendance.

- engaging in informal dialogue with parents when arriving late, to elicit information in a supportive manner.
- record the above on CPOMs.

### Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- ensuring their child is in school, on time, wherever possible.
- engaging with school when they are having difficulties with their child's attendance.
- ensure that they contact the school by 9.30am on the first day of absence providing a reason for the absence and each day thereafter; unless agreed otherwise.
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- notify school of any changes to their contact details

### Registration

The school doors open at 8.40am and children are expected to be in school by 8.40am. This gives plenty of time for all pupils to come into their classroom and be ready to learn when lessons start.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

All attendance records are documented using RMIntegriss. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule

### Lateness

Children who are persistently late after close of register soon fall behind with their learning.

Any pupil who comes into school after 9am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30am will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for

the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.30am, or leave before 1pm, will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Where children are persistently late this will be managed in the same process as persistent non-attendance. Parents will be supported to work with us in improving things, and where applicable an Early Help will be opened.

### Absences

All absences are recorded on RMIntegris and CPOMs. Parents are asked to provide a reason for the absence, and this is recorded. Where a reason is not given, parents are contacted directly to provide one.

### First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent, we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a safeguarding requirement, make contact with the parents of these children by telephone or text message.

# Attendance Protocol Flowchart



## Day 1 of absence

\*Rachel to call contact 1,  
if no answer, contact2 &  
leave a message with both.

"According to our Register #NAME is  
not in school today. Would you please  
call with the reason for this absence  
outlining symptoms clearly."



## Day 2 of absence

\*Rachel to call contact 1,  
if no answer, contact2.

**If still no answer text sent**

Hello it Angie/Fiona from Fairfield Infant  
And Nursery School. Just checking that  
everything is okay as XXXX been absent  
for 2 days with no message."



## Day 4 of absence

\*Rachel to call contact 1,  
if no answer, contact2.

**If still no answer email from  
DSL (Mrs Hewitt)**

"We haven't heard from you about #NAME  
absence for 4 days. The situation is now ur-  
gent and could result in a home visit. Please  
call us on 01298 22441 or reply to this  
email."



## Day 3 of absence

\*Rachel to call contact 1,  
if no answer, contact2.

**If no answer text sent**

"We've been trying to talk to someone  
about #NAME's absence this week, but  
we've had no answer. Please get in  
touch today or we will have to escalate  
this to our Sageguarding Lead, Mrs  
Hewitt"



## Day 5 of absence

\*Rachel to call contact 1,  
if no answer, contact2.

**If still no answer email from  
DSL**

"We haven't heard from you about #NAME  
absence for 5 days. The situation is now ex-  
tremely urgent, if we don't hear from you in  
the next hour, members will complete a home  
visit to check you are safe and well."



## Home visit

Rachel and a member of the  
leadership team to visit.

Depending on the outcome a  
referral to social care may  
be made.

Applications for Leave of Absence in Term Time

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers must not give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a *Request for Leave for Exceptional Circumstances* form, which is available from the school office and handed in five school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

### Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 96%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

When families are struggling to get their children to school, they are invited to speak with the DSL. They may then be referred to our Family Support Worker, who can provide direct support for improving attendance. This may include help developing routines at homes or improving sleep hygiene. We are able to offer individual sessions with parents, and may also work with children where there is a need. Where appropriate an Early Help may be opened, or families may be signposted to external services. It may also be applicable to contact the SENCo if there is a concern around additional needs ([sarah.humpleby@fairfield-inf.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:sarah.humpleby@fairfield-inf.derbyshire.sch.uk)). We encourage parents to work closely with us so that we can identify individual issues and create a bespoke response to improving attendance.

The DSL can be contacted at [safeguarding@fairfield-inf.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@fairfield-inf.derbyshire.sch.uk) or on 01298 22441. Our Family Support Worker can be contacted directly at [rachel.mellor@fairfield-inf.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:rachel.mellor@fairfield-inf.derbyshire.sch.uk).

If a child's attendance does not improve and absences are unauthorised this may lead to consideration of parental responsibility measures which include the issue of penalty notice fines or other statutory action.

### National framework for penalty notices

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G).

If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

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