

*Fairway School & Children's Centre*



# Attendance Policy

December 2017

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## Statement of intent

Fairway School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, excellent attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

Fairway School is committed to:

- Following the framework set in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”<sup>1</sup>

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher                      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair of governors                      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>1</sup> Education Act 1996, section 7

## **1. Legal framework**

1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)

1.2. This policy also has regard to non-statutory DfE guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2014) 'School attendance'

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

2.1. The governing body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures of Fairway School.

2.2. The governing body has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Attendance Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

2.3. The governing body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's complaints policy.

2.4. The Headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and procedures of the school.

2.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for following the Attendance Policy and for ensuring parents and pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

2.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for modelling excellent attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.

2.7. Parents/carers are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.

2.8. Parents/carers are expected to promote excellent attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.

### 3. Definitions

3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- **“Absence”** as:
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Not attending school for any reason.
  
- An **“authorised absence”** as:
  - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
  - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
  - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
  - An absence due to a family emergency/exceptional circumstance.
  
- An **“unauthorised absence”** as:
  - Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
  - Truancy before or during the school day.
  - Absences which have never been properly explained.
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
  - Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
  - Leaving school for no reason during the day.
  
- **“Persistent absenteeism”** as:
  - Missing **15%** or more of schooling across the year **for any reason**.

### 4. Training of staff

- 4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their new starter induction.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

## **5. Pupil expectations**

- 5.1. Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year, to agree to keep their attendance at, or above, **95%** throughout the year.

## **6. Absence procedures**

- 6.1. Parents/carers are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- 6.2. Parents/carers are required to send a note in on the first day that their child returns with a signed explanation of why they were absent; this is required even if the parent/carer has already contacted the school via phone call.
- 6.3. Alternatively, parents/carers may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.
- 6.4. A phone call will be made to the parent/carer of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- 6.5. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents/carers to speak to the attendance officer/Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- 6.6. If a pupil's absence drops below 85%, the attendance officer/EWO will be in contact with the parent/carer to arrange a formal meeting, with the aim of developing a plan of action to improve attendance.

## **7. Contact information**

- 7.1. Parents/carers are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 7.2. Parents/carers are responsible for updating the school if the details change.

## **8. Attendance officer/EWO**

- 8.1. If pupils are persistently absent and/or late, they will quickly be identified by the attendance officer, who will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement.
- 8.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance and/or lateness does not improve, the attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices and may refer the case to the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- 8.3. The EWO may be in contact with the parent/carer of any child whose attendance and/or punctuality falls below expected levels.

## **9. Lateness**

- 9.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 9.2. The school day starts at 8:50am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.
- 9.3. Registers are marked by 9am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 9.4. The register closes at 9:20am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.

## **10. Term-time leave**

- 10.1. At Fairway School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents/carers to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 10.2. The Headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 10.3. The Headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications must be made in advance and the Headteacher must be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 10.4. The Headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- 10.5. Any requests for leave of absence during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 10.6. Requests for leave of absence will not be granted in the following circumstances:
  - Immediately before and during assessment periods.
  - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence.
  - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason.
- 10.7. If parents/carers take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines at levels set down by the local authority.

## **11. Monitoring**

- 11.1. The school and EWO monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 11.2. Fairway School's attendance target is 96.5%.

11.3. Details of our absence levels can be found on our website and in regular newsletters.

## **12. Religious observances**

12.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.

12.2. Parents/carers are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

## **13. Appointments**

13.1. As far as possible, parents/carers will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

13.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to school office.

13.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent/carer.

13.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

## **14. Young carers**

14.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.

14.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.

14.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

## **15. Monitoring and review**

15.1. This policy is reviewed every **two years** by the **Headteacher**; the next scheduled review date for this policy is **December 2019**.

15.2. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents/carers.

## Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Fairway School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance and punctuality meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance and/or punctuality falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the senior leadership team (SLT) on a weekly basis by the attendance officer, detailing weekly and annual attendance to date.
2. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the attendance officer and SLT.
3. Contact is made with parents/carers on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT by the attendance officer on a weekly basis.
4. Contact is made to the parents/carers of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. Parents/carers of children who are known to be 'lone travellers' are contacted first to ensure the child's safety.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 95%\* a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents/carers can work with the school and their child to improve attendance. \*% depends on time of academic year
7. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance officer contacts the parents/carers to discuss this.
8. The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents/carers are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and set targets for their child. If parents/carers are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the EWO, who will then conduct a home visit.
9. After the two week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents/carers on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents/carers continues until attendance stabilises to 95%.
10. If targets are not met, the classroom teacher makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents/carers. If there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed penalty notice is issued.
11. Attendance is celebrated each week during a Headteacher's awards assembly. The class with the best attendance receives a certificate and trophy to keep for the week.

If a class receives 100% attendance for the week, class members choose individual gifts from the prize box.

12. Individual attendance certificates are given to pupils each term for 100% attendance. Children who have 100% attendance for the year are also entered into a draw to receive a significant prize e.g. a bike