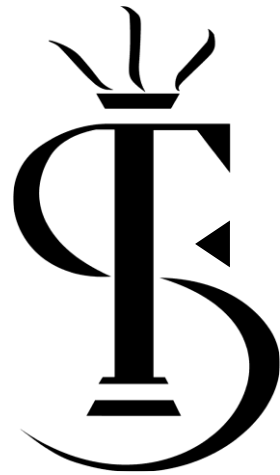


SOUTH FARNHAM SCHOOL

The Continual Pursuit of Excellence



ATTENDANCE

POLICY

SOUTH FARNHAM SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The local governors/trustees are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with Inclusion Service to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at the start of the school day and will be kept open for the first 10 minutes. The register for the second session will be taken immediately after lunch and will be kept open for 10 minutes.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school by phone on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment (via email or calling the school office).

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Pupils recorded 'as late after close of register' count as an unauthorised absence for that session. The pupil's name will be recorded in line with school procedures in case of emergency procedures/fire drills etc.

If there are ongoing concerns in relation to punctuality, the pupil's parent/carer will be contacted in the first instance. Staff will support the family to address the lateness. If there is no improvement, the school's inclusion officer may then be contacted to liaise with the family.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence by telephone to their parent/carer to ascertain the reason
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents each academic year at the end of the school report.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.7 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion. Parents need to make an application using the proforma in Appendix 2.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

The Headteacher, may consult with the Chair of Governors and other local schools (in cases where leave has also been requested for siblings), will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each request will be considered separately and a decision made based on the reasons for each request.

Family holidays are not deemed exceptional circumstances. In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will not be authorized.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

4.8 Reducing persistent absence

Explain your school's procedures for targeting unauthorised absence. For example – meetings, letters, closer monitoring.

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these Inclusion Service in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

The school will meet with parents to discuss any concerns regarding attendance.

The school will tell parents that if the absence persists that a referral will be made to the Inclusion Service.

Failure to comply with the expectations set by the inclusion service may results in further action as detailed below.

4.9 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

South Farnham School encourages regular attendance in the following ways;

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- by responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- by marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration.
- by publishing and displaying attendance statistics;
- by requiring pupil to regularly record their own attendance and punctuality;
- by celebrating good and improved attendance;
- by monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Inclusion Service if the irregular attendance continues.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

The pupil's parent/carer is expected to call/email the school each day their child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Inclusion Service.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Attendance is collected using SIMs. It is used for internal purposes, in order to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by Trustee and Governors.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school

D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
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Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Proforma



SOUTH FARNHAM SCHOOL

Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Please read the following guidance carefully.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to back up your request.

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct. The Penalty Notice is £60, per child per parent/carer, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision. For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Name of child:	Class:
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for	
from:	to:
Number of school days:	
The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested:	
Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? YES / NO	
If YES, please give dates and details:	
I also have children at...	
Signed: (Parent/Carer)	Date:

To be completed by the Headteacher		
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:		
Approved		The absence will be recorded as authorised.
Not approved		The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
Signed: _____ (Headteacher)		Date: _____