



SOUTH FARNHAM SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for monitoring attendance. They were developed in consultation with teaching staff and were formally adopted by staff and Governors. The policy was last updated in Autumn 2017 will be reviewed in 2020.

The Staff of South Farnham School are committed, in partnership with the parents, pupils, governors, the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community commendably, and of which the community is proud.

The school staff firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day;
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or Head of Year, any problems that deter them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and send a note on their return to school;
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

We expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- monitor every pupil's attendance;
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;

- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence;
- encourage good attendance;
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children;
- provide a safe learning environment;
- provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's expectations with regard to regular school attendance.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service;
- Meet, where possible the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

Encouraging 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 Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer the school will endeavour to contact them;
- the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer and invite them into school to discuss their concerns. The school will tell parents that if the absence persists that a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service;
- failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWS may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform South Farnham School staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

School Organisation

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 views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the School has the following responsibilities:

Head Teacher, Governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- adopt the whole policy;
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided;
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence;
- ensure that key staff have time-tabled periods for liaison and follow-up work with the EWS and appropriate access to attendance data;
- consult and liaise closely with the EWS on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay;
- to work in close collaboration with the EWS during their termly register analysis;

Class teachers:

- to complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily;
- to follow up any unexplained non-attendance;
- to record all reasons for absences in the register;
- to inform the designated person in charge of overall attendance/head of year of concerns;
- to be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the Head of Year.

Parents/carers should also need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

Dental and medical treatments

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school should be notified of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

Lateness

Please note that, if pupils arrive after the school start time they will be recorded as late. School registers are closed 15 minutes after the school start time and pupils arriving after this time will be recorded 'as late after close of register' which counts 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.

Requests for leave of absence during term time

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term-time for their child as a right and authorisation cannot be given retrospectively. Permission for absence during term time is at the school's discretion and will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**. If a family needs to request absence in term-time then an application for leave of absence form should be obtained from the school office, completed and submitted to the Headteacher. 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. Any request for a regular absence from school will not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Family holidays

The school holiday dates and end of Key Stage Assessment dates are published well in advance and are available from the school office and on the school website. Family holidays need to be booked within the school holiday dates. 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 authorised

Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider a prosecution in the magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

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

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Appendix – Application form for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances