



Attendance Policy

Date: Spring 2017

Review: Spring 2019



Attendance Policy

Mission Statement

We seek to ensure that every child receives an education which maximises opportunities to achieve their potential.

We aim to provide a welcoming, supportive environment in which children, families and staff work together to ensure that our children attend school regularly and punctually.

We have consistent and effective practice in place for monitoring attendance and punctuality, supported by the Local Authority and its partners to ensure the safeguarding of all children in our care.

Aims

- ❖ To improve the overall percentage attendance of children, working in partnership with the Education Welfare Service, other agencies and families.
- ❖ To raise the profile of attendance and punctuality.
- ❖ To ensure there is a consistent and systematic approach to gathering and analysing data, recognising good and improving attendance and punctuality of all our children.
- ❖ For children and families to understand the importance of attending school regularly and on time.

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Introduction

Ferndale Primary school is required to provide two possible sessions per day, morning and afternoon, to all pupils. The length of each session, break and the school day is determined by the school's governing body. School must meet for at least 380 sessions or 190 days during any school year to educate their pupils. If a school is prevented from meeting for one or more sessions because of an unavoidable event, it should find a practical way of holding extra sessions. Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995*, Ferndale Primary School is required to take attendance registers twice a day, once at the start of the first session in the morning and again at the start of the second session in the afternoon. In their register, school is required to record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Late (plus other codes)

Where a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, schools have a responsibility to:

- Ascertain the reason
- If there's a cause for concern, school has a duty of care to ensure the proper safeguarding procedure is taken.
- Indicate in their register whether the absence is authorised by the school or unauthorised
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is then used to download data to the school census.
- The Parent of every child of compulsory school age is required to ensure that their child receives a suitable full time education to the child's ability, age , aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Failure of a parent to secure regular attendance at Ferndale Primary School can lead to a penalty notice or prosecution. Local authority (LA) and school have legal responsibilities regarding accurate recording of a pupil's attendance

Aims and Targets

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Ferndale Primary school places a high priority on achieving standards and believes that excellent pupil attendance and punctuality are essential. In order for children to achieve their potential, pupils must be highly motivated to learn, keen and eager to attend school. Regular, punctual and attendance will establish good habits that will support them throughout their lives To achieve this, the Governors and staff are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that the school achieves a MINIMUM of 98% target attendance throughout the school. The Government expects us to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (every child above 90%);
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education, to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Ferndale Primary school Aims to Establish Good Practice with the Under Five's attendance.

It is not compulsory for a child under five years old to attend school, however, at Ferndale Nursery and Reception we are promoting good practice within attendance.

For Nursery and Reception children, it is important from a young age that they establish their personal, social and emotional development. Regular attendance will ensure that all children have the greatest opportunity to develop these very important early skills and become lifelong learners.

Procedures

PARENTS will:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly
- **Notify school every day of absence before 09:00am by phone message on 0121 357 3326 option1 / or email attendance@ferndale.sandwell.sch.uk**
- Complete a request form for absence in term time for exceptional circumstances
- Ensure that when their child returns to school they bring in written confirmation of why they were absent or hand in medical evidence for 4 or more days absence due to illness
- Meet with the Attendance Officer to discuss their child's attendance when necessary

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- Take an interest in their child's school work.
- Work with the school to promote the importance of attendance with their child
- instill in their children the importance of regular attendance

CLASS TEACHER will:

- Complete the register at the start of each session (morning and afternoon)
- Monitor daily patterns of attendance and report any concerns that arise to the Senior Leadership Team
- Provide work for children to do at home if an absence is due to a long term illness, disability or other circumstances
- Make parents aware of concerns over attendance.
- Encourage parents to take an interest in their child's work and understand the effect of absence on their child's progress

ATTENDANCE OFFICER will:

- Input attendance data on to the system
- Print off official reports for each calendar month for monitoring purposes or complete the absence record book
- Monitor patterns of attendance and lateness
- Make first day absence calls and record reasons for absence
- Carry out spotlight procedures with parents of children whose attendance is of a concern.
- Hold meetings with parents regarding attendance
- Promote positive attitudes to attending school
- Liaise with external services regarding attendance and safeguarding

Punctuality

The doors are opened to pupils at 8:40am and closed at 8:50am promptly, after which time, pupils **must** report to the school office. They will be marked as 'Late' using the 'L' symbol if they are no later than 9:10am. 'U' is for 'late for after register closed'. Any children arriving after this will be marked as unauthorised late and the number of minutes recorded. The school expects all children to arrive at school on time and to be collected on time at the end of the school day. Repeated lates are seen as absences and will be treated accordingly. (See appendix 1 for coding of marks)

Authorised absence

An absence is classed as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian, for example, if a

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child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classed as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. The absence is also unauthorised if a child is away from school without reason, even with the support of a parent.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the L.A. support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation. A letter will be sent home advising parents of the absences record of pupils that fall below 90%. The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Pupils causing concern

In cases where a pupil's attendance is causing concern, i.e. below 90%, parents will be informed in writing. Should the attendance not improve, a second letter will be sent, requesting a meeting with the attendance officer. Should any further absences occur, without obvious medical reason, the school may request medical evidence from the parents. Failure to provide such evidence may result in the absence being unauthorised.

A third and final letter will be sent should the attendance not improve. Failure to improve the child's attendance at school may result in a referral to the Attendance Service. As a result, an Attendance & Prosecution Officer who works on behalf of the Local Authority may consider taking legal action against the parents under **(Section 444 of the Education Act 1996)**.

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If a child is absent

Parents are requested to telephone or email the school every day of absence before 9am. A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, for example if a child has a medical appointment. Pupils must be signed out and in during sessions. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child. The Attendance Officer will follow safeguarding procedures should the concerns regarding the family be significant and no successful contact made.

Note: When a child returns to school, a written note must be sent to school to explain the absence.

Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there may be exceptional circumstances whereby a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for their child to attend, for example, a one-off special event. In such instances, we expect parents to contact the school well in advance, but normally the request will not be granted.

Revised guidelines issued by the government outline that no requests will be granted when a child has, for example, irregular attendance.

As an inclusive school, Ferndale Primary acknowledges the required observations for religious faiths. Therefore, a maximum of one day, at any one time, will be authorised upon request from the parents of the child concerned. **However we would rather work with families or children to be released early rather than taking a whole day.**

Unauthorised leave of absence in term time or irregular attendance, will not be authorised by the head teacher.

Long –term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home, so that they can keep up with their school work. If absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or become repetitive, the

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school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Rewards for good attendance

All the children who have 100 % attendance in any one term will receive an attendance bear certificate, a silver certificate for any two terms and a gold certificate plus a treat for any child who has 100% attendance for a whole year.

We also have an attendance league, where each half term, the best class will get a treat and the weekly winning class receives extra playtime.

Punctuality is also rewarded by extra play.