



## FARTHINGHOE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

### **Introduction**

Regular attendance at school is vital. Without it, the learning process is disrupted and pupils who miss time at school do not achieve as highly as they could. Good attendance at school establishes a positive working ethos early in life. We expect all children to attend school every day as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at schools is, under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, a legal requirement. Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that any child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.

Amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. Reference to family holiday, extended leave and the statutory threshold of ten school days have been removed. The amendments make clear that parents/carers have no entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.

Under the Education Regulations, the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.

Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, parents/carers (not siblings) must notify the school on the first day of absence.

Below is an explanation of the terms 'authorised' and 'unauthorised', our attendance policy: how we register pupils, monitor attendance, record absences and some suggestions about how you can help.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

It is the responsibility of the school, under Education Pupil Attendance Targets Regulations 2005, to decide whether or not any given absence is 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.

#### **Definitions:**

##### **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as 'authorised' when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Some examples of 'authorised' absences are:

- when a child is ill
- when a child is receiving non-routine medical attention (appointment cards should be available)
- when a close family member has died
- when prior consent has been obtained from the Headteacher, for example for a music examination

## **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as 'unauthorised' when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Some examples of 'unauthorised absences' are:

- Family day out
- Holiday in term time
- Shopping trip
- Caring for a family member
- A birthday treat
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory

Absences, both authorised and unauthorised, will be recorded on the child's annual report to parents. All attendance data is reported to Northamptonshire County Council who may consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

## **Holidays in Term Time**

Holiday taken during term time will not be authorised unless there are specific, exceptional circumstances.

The reasons for this are as follows:

- Good attendance is one of the most important factors in achievement at school and we are committed to helping every child achieve their full potential.
- Any absence from school disrupts a child's learning.
- Missing lessons can damage a pupil's self-confidence and understanding.
- In addition, teachers who then have to slow down lessons to accommodate those who have missed previous sessions are not doing justice to the rest of the class who attended all the lessons.

Parents who wish to claim exceptional circumstances as a reason for taking holidays in term time should write a formal letter to the Headteacher outlining the individual circumstances of the case. This must be received by the school at least four weeks before the holiday commences.

The Headteacher will then make a decision based on the following criteria:

- Are the circumstances common place or likely to recur?
- Is the pupil's attendance in the current year less than 95%?
- Does the requested holiday period coincide with any assessment or examinations?

If the answer to ANY of these questions is 'Yes' then the holiday request must be denied.

If the answer is 'No' then the following criteria will be applied:

- Is the absence requested because the student wants to attend a specialist educational experience? (eg. music school, sporting activity)
- Is the request made because of compelling reasons connected with family relationships?
- Is the request for absence the family's main holiday, where this cannot be taken outside of school term time?
- Is the request made for religious or cultural requirements?

If the answer to any of these questions is 'Yes' the Headteacher will exercise their judgement and may permit the holiday request. No more than ten days in any one academic year will be granted.

All requests will be considered on an individual basis and any request authorised for another pupil or granted on a previous occasion cannot be treated as a precedent.

### **Penalty Notices**

The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. Penalty Notices (Fines) may be issued to each parent who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

The Penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days, per parent, per child. For a 2 parent family with 2 children, the total fine, if paid within 21 days, would be £240.

Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued when a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 6 school week period (a school day is 2 sessions).

This includes;

- Any absence marked in the register as unauthorised.
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- An absence in term time which has not been authorised by the head teacher.

### **Policy into Practice:**

#### **School Times**

The School will open be open to pupils for 190 days per year. The term dates for Northamptonshire schools in the Daventry/South West area will be followed. Parents will be supplied with a list of term dates at least once during the preceding school year.

School session times are as follows:

<b>Key Stage</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Afternoon</b>
Foundation Stage / Key Stage One	8.55am – 12pm	1.10pm – 3.15pm
Key Stage Two	8.55am – 12pm	1.00pm – 3.15pm

Pupils may arrive from 8.45am. Registration is at 8.55am.

#### **Registration and attendance procedures**

A register is taken every morning and afternoon in each classroom (at 8.55am in the morning and 1.00pm for Key Stage 2 / 1.10pm for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 in the afternoon) and total numbers for the session noted.

#### **Lateness**

If a pupil is not present to answer their name, they will be marked as late. Any child arriving in school after 8.55am or 1.00pm must be signed in to the Late Book by a Parent/Carer.

Registration is closed 15 minutes after it is taken (9.10am and 1.15pm), at which point a pupil is marked as absent (unauthorised), whether or not he or she subsequently arrives

If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and we have not heard from parents, we shall try to contact home by telephone, email or letter. Contact will be made on the first day a pupil is absent.

#### **Absence due to illness**

All absences are recorded in the register. A telephone message, letter or email is required from the parents on the first day of absence for illness. This will ensure that the absence is recorded as 'authorised'.

If we discover a pattern to absences, or are concerned about the frequency or validity of absences, we shall contact parents. If we discover a school based problem, we shall seek to remedy it. If there is an out-of-school problem, we shall offer support and access to other services as appropriate. In all cases, we shall help the child to re-establish him/herself into the usual pattern of school life. This is important to their success in school.

### **Collection from School at times other than the end of the session**

If a child is collected by a parent, or other approved adult, between the hours of 9am and 3.30pm then the adult should report to the school office so that the child can be collected and signed out.

### **How can you help?**

- Do not allow your son or daughter to stay away from school unless absolutely necessary – attendance matters!
- Let the school know of any absence. We do not wish to record absence as ‘unauthorised’ unnecessarily.
- Make sure that your child arrives punctually. Late arrival is recorded. Arrival after 9.10pm and 1.15pm counts as unauthorised absence.
- Avoid doctors, dentists and hospital appointments during school time.
- Avoid any family holidays during term time.
- If your son or daughter is worried about anything at school, encourage them to share their concerns so that we can help, rather than they begin to feel they do not want to come to school.
- Support the school by recognising that good attendance is important.

### **Reporting attendance**

- Any parent/carer who wishes to check his/her son/daughter’s attendance can do so by notifying the school office. A child’s attendance record is included as part of the annual school report in the form of number of sessions attended, out of the possible number of sessions and the number of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence.
- We will contact parents/carers by letter to report attendance below 90% and 80%, at least once per term.
- We will contact parents/carers by letter to report persistent lateness.
- The school also has to make registers readily available to the Local Authority’s Education Welfare Officer, who, as part of their duties, may contact parents to seek clarification or follow up matters of concern.
- The school are also required to report attendance to the Local Authority, and to the DfE, so that data can be published. These records are reported as global figures and contain no individual data. The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations, which become effective from September 2007, require governing bodies of all maintained schools to set overall absence targets as attendance is a key whole-school improvement issue.

**REMEMBER: Attendance and achievement are linked.**

This Policy follows Local Authority guidelines and regulations from the DfE.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier should there be any change in Local Authority guidelines and/or applicable regulations.

***This policy was approved by the Governing Body in their meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019.***

***Review Due November 2021.***