



**Integrity, Fellowship and Endeavour**

## **Attendance Policy**

<b>Author:</b>	<b>Roger Eckersley</b>
<b>Date of approval:</b>	<b>January 2022</b>
<b>Next Review date:</b>	<b>January 2025</b>
<b>Review period:</b>	<b>3 years</b>
<b>Status:</b>	<b>Recommended</b>

## **1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

- 1.1. Good attendance at school is important for academic progress, social interaction with peers and the opportunity to participate in clubs and try new activities. The expectation is that pupils should aim for 100% attendance every year.
- 1.2. This policy is intended to ensure that parents / carers and pupils are aware of the importance of attendance and to make attendance and punctuality a priority for all.
- 1.3. This policy takes into account:
  - 1.3.1 The Department for Education's 'School Attendance guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, August 2020', as amended.
  - 1.3.2 The Department for Education's 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs, January 2013'.
  - 1.3.3 The school's legal duties under paragraphs 7 and 2 of the schedule to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended, with respect to the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and under the Equality Act 2010, and the Education Acts 2002 & 1996.
  - 1.3.4 The Gloucestershire County Council Guidance for Schools 'Securing Regular and Punctual Attendance', including the 'Penalty Notice Protocol' that, in line with Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act of 2003, empowers designated LA officers to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school in respect of holidays taken in term time and excessive lateness.
- 1.3 This policy covers attendance expectations for pupils in Years 7 – 11. Attendance expectations for pupils in Years 12 and 13 are detailed in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form Code of Conduct.

## **2. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES**

The attendance of pupils is implicitly linked to a wide range of policies but particularly to the following:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- SEND Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy

## **3. PRINCIPLES**

- 3.1 Every pupil should aim for 100% attendance.
- 3.2 By law, every young person must attend the school they are registered at regularly. At Farmor's School this means pupils should attend school for all available sessions unless their absence is authorised by the school.
- 3.3 Good attendance should and will be recognised. Pupils with attendance below satisfactory are only invited to end of year reward trips in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.4 We ask that every effort be made by parents / carers to avoid school time when planning holidays or medical appointments.
- 3.5 The school takes seriously its duty to safeguard the welfare of its pupils. Unexplained absences and a lack of contact from parents / carers cause concern and may lead to

a member of staff visiting the pupil's home or the pastoral team requesting the involvement of outside agencies.

- 3.6 Maintaining good communication levels with parents / carers is the key to maintaining excellent attendance.
- 3.7 Should a pupil be concerned about attending school, parents / carers should contact the pupil's form tutor in the first instance to explore ways in which we can support and address concerns.

#### **4. DEFINITIONS**

- 4.1 We view attendance above 99% as excellent; above 97% as good; and above 95% as satisfactory, meeting our minimum expectations.
- 4.2 Attendance below 95% is concerning; below 92% considered poor; and should attendance fall to 90% or below a pupil is considered a 'persistent absentee' (PA) who does not attend school regularly.
- 4.3 Authorised absence: examples of authorised absence include medical appointments that cannot be rearranged outside of the school day, and bereavements.
- 4.4 Illness: For a short term absence due to illness, where a pupil's attendance is satisfactory or better, we will authorise the absence when a parent or carer notifies Student Services.
- 4.5 Approved Educational Activities: examples of this include work experience or interviews, external trips and visits, Art, Music, Drama or other performance events. These do not count towards a pupil's absence figures.
- 4.6 All other absences are likely to be unauthorised.
- 4.7 Attendance Improvement Tool (AIT) is a process by which parents / carers are invited in to discuss reasons for a pupil's poor attendance.
- 4.8 Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM): The first step of a legal process to improve attendance should the AIT not improve attendance,
- 4.9 Penalty Notice: Local Authorities and schools are authorised to issue penalty notices to those with parental responsibility of their child not attending school regularly. In practice, Farmor's School does not issue penalty notices; this is done by the Local Authority.
- 4.10 Persistent Absentee (PA): Where attendance is below 90% a pupil is classified as a PA. We closely monitor the attendance of all PA pupils and will work with parents / carers and the Local Authority to bring attendance back above this threshold. Medical evidence will generally be required to authorise any absence for PA pupils who have been through or are on the AIT and AIM process.

#### **5. OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 Short term absence:
  - 5.1.1 Pupils must arrive at school before 8.40am. Morning registers are taken at 8.45am and close at 10.00am. Pupils arriving after this time, without an approved reason, will be marked with an unauthorised absence code.

- 5.1.2 Parents / Carers should notify the school of a pupil's absence by telephone to Student Services (01285 712302, option 2) on the first morning of absence by 8.45am, and each day thereafter.
- 5.1.3 To guard against truancy we presume all absence is unauthorised until a reason acceptable to the school is given by a parent / carer.
- 5.1.4 For a day set aside exclusively for religious observance, pupils may be granted authorised leave, subject to confirmation from the religious body.
- 5.1.5 Parents / Carers who wish to request that their child is absent from school should fill in the Request For Absence form (Appendix 1) in advance. This will be authorised only in exceptional circumstances and authorisation cannot be applied retrospectively.

## 5.2 Long term absence:

- 5.2.1 In cases of long term absence we will work with the relevant external agencies, including the hospital school, to support the pupil's wellbeing.
- 5.2.2 The Local Authority are responsible for arranging full time education for children, who because of illness are absent for more than 15 days, would not receive suitable education without such provision. This education should aim to achieve good academic attainment particularly in English, Maths and Science.
- 5.2.3 Reducing the timetable to support a return to school for a pupil with attendance issues will be considered in some circumstances, usually following guidance from a medical professional. This can only be used as a short term solution to help a pupil reintegrate into school and is a stepping stone to resuming a full time timetable.
- 5.2.4 For a planned long term absence, such as temporary family relocation, work will not be set by the school.

## 5.3 Absence for child performers:

- 5.3.1 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allow the parents of a child performer to seek leave of absence from school to take part in a performance, subject to the necessary licence from the local authority. Requests for pupils to compete in sporting events at County level or above will be considered under the same legislation.

## 5.4 Encouraging high levels of attendance:

- 5.4.1 Should a pupil's attendance fall below 92% parents / carers will be invited in to discuss the reasons and agree the necessary support to overcome any barriers to attendance (using the AIT process). An attendance target will be set at this meeting and monitored over four weeks. Should the poor attendance be attributed to issues in school (such as allegations of bullying) this will be followed up in accordance with the relevant school policy.
- 5.4.2 Should there be continued poor attendance at school without a valid reason, we are required to work with the Local Authority and will send those with parental responsibility a warning letter. The letter will ask that parents / carers attend an AIM to explore why the support put in place by the AIT is not

working. Ultimately the Local Authority could proceed towards legal action against all with parental responsibility, should the pupil not meet attendance targets agreed in the eight week monitoring period.

5.5 Catching up with work missed:

- 5.5.1 If a pupil is absent for a Covid-19 reason, we are required by law to set work. This will be on the Show My Homework website <https://www.satchelone.com>
- 5.5.2 For pupils away due to other illness, it is our assumption that they will be too ill to work whilst at home. Pupils away on a sports fixture or other educational activity will also not be able to work during this time. In both of these instances, pupils are expected to copy up work missed.
- 5.5.3 Any pupils who have an 'unauthorised absence' will not have work set for them. By setting work we would be 'authorising' the absence.
- 5.5.4 During any periods of exceptional short term school closure (eg: due to snow or lack of electricity or water) staff are not expected to set work for pupils.

## 6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 This policy was written following consultation with Farmor's School Pastoral and Senior Leaders and the Inclusion Officers at Gloucestershire County Council. It was approved by the Governing Board.

## 7. MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATION

- 7.1 This policy's implementation is the responsibility of all staff. Its use and effectiveness will be supported and monitored by the Senior Leadership Team on behalf of the Governing Board.
- 7.2 This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Board at least every three years.