



Integrity, Fellowship and Endeavour

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Review period:	3 years
Status:	Recommended

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 guidance for Headteachers, school staff and Governors 'School Attendance Nov 2016'
 - 1.3.2 The school's legal duties under paragraph 7 of the schedule to the 'Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014' with respect to the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils under the 'Equality Act 2010' and the 'Education Acts 2002 & 1996'
 - 1.3.1 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.
- 1.4. This policy covers attendance expectations for pupils in Years 7 – 11. Attendance of pupils in Years 12 and 13 is covered in the 6th 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 student 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 be rewarded. Pupils with good or excellent attendance will be recognised in celebration assemblies with certificates and reward points. Pupils with attendance below satisfactory are only invited to end of year reward trips in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.4 Every effort should 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 student'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 student 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 student is considered a 'persistent absentee' (PA) who does not attend school regularly.
- 4.3 Authorised absence: examples of authorised absence include urgent medical appointments that have to happen in the school day and bereavements.
- 4.4 Approved Educational Activities: examples of this include work experience or interviews, external trips and visits, Art, Music and Drama events. These do not count towards a student's absence figures.
- 4.5 Attendance Improvement Tool (AIT) is a process by which parents / carers are invited in to discuss reasons for a student's poor attendance.
- 4.6 Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM): The first step of a legal process to improve attendance should the AIT not improve attendance,

- 4.7 Penalty Notice: Local Authorities and schools are authorised to issue penalty notices to those with parental responsibility for their child not attending school regularly. In practice, it is the Local Authority that issues penalty notices on behalf of Farmor's School.
- 4.8 Persistent Absentee (PA): Where attendance is below 90% a student 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 8.40. Morning registers are taken at 8.45 and close at 10.00. 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 student's absence by telephone to Student Services (01285 712302, option 2) on the first morning of absence 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 Pupils who have a long period of absence for medical reasons will be issued with optional work to carry out at home, to help keep up with their peers. In cases of long term absence we will work with the relevant external agencies to support the student's wellbeing, including the hospital school.
- 5.2.2 Reducing the timetable to support a student with attendance issues will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

5.3 Encouraging high levels of attendance

- 5.3.1 We are required to inform the Local Authority if a student has had ten days of continuous unauthorised absence. This is classed as being ‘missing in education’.
- 5.3.2 Should a student’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.
- 5.3.3 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 student not meet attendance targets agreed in the eight week monitoring period.

6. CONSULTATION

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

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.

Success will be measured by whether we meet our targets at all levels. The whole school target of 95.7% for 2017/18 has been benchmarked against other local schools and agreed by the Governing Board. This target will be reviewed annually.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Board at least every three years.