



Integrity, Fellowship and Endeavour

Attendance Policy

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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 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, August 2024.
 - 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, August 2024 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. This can be found [here](#).
- 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 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 and Exclusion 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 by the Department for Education to be 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, unless we have reason to believe the absence is not due to a genuine illness.
- 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. All other absences are likely to be unauthorised.
- 4.6 Attendance Sessions: Attendance is recorded and reported to the Local authority twice daily, an AM and a PM session. One day's absence equates to two sessions on an attendance certificate
- 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 Contract: This is considered when meeting for the AIT to record measures that the school, pupil and parent agree to implement. Whilst there is no legal outcome for non-compliance, it may be used as evidence in any future prosecution for non-attendance
- 4.9 Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM): The first step of a legal process to improve attendance should the AIT not improve attendance,
- 4.10 A Parent is defined under the Education Act 1996 as:
- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
 - Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil
 - Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child
- 4.11 Education Supervision Order: This provides a formal legal intervention for the Local Authority to direct the parent and child to ensure a suitable full-time education should the Attendance Contract and AIM not have impact. These are made through the Family or High Court
- 4.12 Notice to Improve (NTI): A Notice to Improve request may be submitted when a pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) within 10 school weeks for a combination of the following
- An unauthorised holiday
 - Arriving late after the registers close
 - Any other unauthorised absences
- 4.13 Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN): Local Authorities and schools are authorised to issue FPNs to those with parental responsibility of their child not attending school regularly. Gloucestershire County Council will, in agreement with Farmor's School, issue these to parents where there has been no improvement following an NTI.
- 4.14 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. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

5. OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

5.1 Short term absence:

- 5.1.1 Pupils should arrive at school by 8.40am. Morning registers are taken at 8.45am and close at 9.15am. Pupils arriving after 9.15am 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 to which the pupil's parent(s) belong.
 - 5.1.5 Parents / Carers who wish to request that their child is absent from school should fill in the Request for Absence form from the school's website 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. For more detail, see the Medical Conditions Policy.
 - 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 a temporary family relocation, work will not be set by the school.
- 5.3 Absence for child performers:
- 5.3.1 The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 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 meet with the Student Manager or Head of Year 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 as follows:
- Put formal support in place in the form of an Attendance Contract or an Education Supervision Order.
 - Issue a Notice to Improve and/or penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour.
 - Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
 - Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support
- 5.4.3 The school's nominated SLT Attendance Champion is Assistant Headteacher Roger Eckersley, he can be contacted via admin@farmors.gloucs.sch.uk. His role is to work with staff, parents and students to promote good attendance and ensure that school staff follow the attendance policy.
- 5.4.4 The school's nominated Attendance Officer is Fiona Jesson, she can be contacted via admin@farmors.gloucs.sch.uk. Her role is to work with the Attendance Champion to ensure accurate attendance and legal records are kept and monitored.

5.5 Catching up with work missed:

- 5.5.1 If a pupil is absent for a public health reason, we are required by law to set work. This will be on the Satchel One portal <https://www.satchelone.com>
- 5.5.2 For pupils away for a short period (<5 days) due to other illness, it is our assumption that they will be too ill to complete school 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 these instances, pupils are expected to copy up work missed on their return to school.
- 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.

- 5.6 During any periods of exceptional short term school closure (eg: due to snow or lack of electricity or water), it may not be possible for staff to set work on day one. Students should check Satchel One for any tasks set. From day two, work will be set for most lessons. More details about the remote learning provision is detailed on the school's website.

6. Processes for recording attendance:

- 6.1 Registration periods are open for a half hour each morning and afternoon as follows:
The morning session is from 8.45 to 9.15 every day
The afternoon session starts after lunch (period 5) and is from 2.05 to 2.35 on Monday and 2.25 to 2.55 on other days.

- 6.2 Unauthorised Absence codes that staff use are recorded electronically in SIMS as follows:
- L – used when a pupil is not present for the start of the registration period:
 - U – used when a pupil arrives in school after the end of the registration period.
 - G – used when a student is absent due to an unauthorised family holiday
 - O – used for any other unauthorised absence
- 6.3 Registration codes are kept for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

7 LEGAL SANCTIONS:

- 7.1 The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Notices to Improve and Fixed Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice [Code of Conduct](#).
- 7.2 If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice. There is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice.
- 7.3 The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 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.

9. MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATION

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Board every three years.