



Peterchurch, Herefordshire HR2 0SG | 01981 550 231 | admin@fairfield.hereford.sch.uk | Head Teacher: Mrs S L Gaston

ATTENDANCE POLICY

AIM

To raise levels of achievement by ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in the school.

OBJECTIVES

- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
- To inform parents of attendance and punctuality issues.
- To identify causes of non-attendance and consequently take action.
- To improve attendance of individuals, groups and the school.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents, carers and students.
- To work with other agencies.
- To recognise the diverse needs of our individual students, particularly when planning re-integration.

THE LAW

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). Any absence should be considered unauthorised unless there is a valid reason otherwise. Unauthorised absence at any level is considered unacceptable by both the school and local authority.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. **The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

PROCEDURES

Senior Leadership Team:

- Give attendance a high profile at assemblies, school events and in the school newsletter.
- Support HoKS on issues of non-attendance and internal truancy, remedying causes and applying sanctions.
- Report on attendance to governors.

Heads of Key Stage:

- Give attendance a high profile at assemblies and school events.
- Monitor year group attendance targets and keep records.
- Implement system of rewards and sanctions.
- Support Form Tutors on issues of non-attendance and with internal truancy, remedying causes and applying sanctions.
- Meet with parents to discuss attendance problems as soon as they are identified.
- Support with referrals to the Local Authority via Learning Support Manager.
- Ensure work is provided for excluded students and long-term absentees.
- Look for patterns of absences and consider impact of curriculum upon attendance alongside other possible causes.
- Work with appropriate staff to create individual packages and re-integration plans.

Form Tutors:

- Be a good role-model for students by actively promoting the school's attendance ethos both via discussion and practically.
- Give attendance a high profile.
- Praise students for arriving on time.
- Take prompt action where students are late or absent without explanation.
- Keep an accurate register. Students signing in after 9.00am should do so at the office.
- Send a paper register to the Office if SIMS does not work.
- Inform HoKS and Learning Managers when absence is causing concern.

Attendance Officer/Learning Managers:

- Oversee administration of the SIMS Register system. Streamline and make adjustments to systems and procedures.
- Keep parents informed of any unexplained absences before they become unauthorised.
- Support the work of SLT, HoKS and Form Tutors by:-
 1. Providing regular attendance information via bi-weekly monitoring spreadsheet.
 2. Phoning students on 1st Day Contact List and monitoring attendance and punctuality alerting Form Tutors and HoKS when concerns arise.
 3. Issuing attendance letters and organising Attendance Panels – see Appendix 3.
 4. Working with colleagues to identify causes of non-attendance.
 5. Meeting with HoKS regularly to make and monitor interventions and referrals.
 6. Keep staff informed of attendance issues via attendance monitoring spread sheet.

Parents

- Ensure that children leave for school on time every day.
- Provide written explanation for children's absences from school.
- To provide medical evidence e.g. doctor's note if requested for either frequent or extended periods of absence (see Appendix 2).
- Endeavour not to take children out of school in term time.
- Where it is not avoidable to take children out of school during term time, a holiday form must be completed and permission granted by the head teacher.

- Notify the school as soon as problems arise with child's attendance.
- If no letter has been sent in advance, telephone the school on the first morning child is absent and regularly keep the school informed by telephone if the absence exceeds three days.
- Support the school in its ethos relating to the direct link between attendance and achievement.

Students:

- Arrive at 8.45am for registration every morning and 1.35pm for registration every afternoon.
- Students arriving after 8.55am should sign in at the school office.
- Be on time for lessons.
- Make sure a note is sent from parents to explain absences.
- If late sign in at the Office.
- If they need to leave early, ensure the adult collecting them signs out at the Office.
- Tell Form Tutor or HoKS or Learning Managers if having any problems attending school.

Support Available:

- Target attendance intervention accessed through HoKS referral.
- Attendance Reports.
- Attendance panels and regular reviews.
- Meetings with HoKS, and other agencies to provide support for children and their parents.
- Re-integration through student services for casual admissions and on return from long-term absence.
- Re-integration timetables where appropriate.
- Individualised curriculum where appropriate.
- Learning Managers support - including possible home visits and 1-2-1 work.

Rewards

- Commendations.
- Half-termly, termly and annual certificates and letters home for individuals and form prizes for groups.
- Good attendance references to potential employers/colleges.
- Improved academic attainment

Sanctions

The school reserves the right to use any of the following sanctions to fulfil its obligations with respect to school attendance:

- Form Tutor detention.
- Faculty detention.
- HoKS detention.
- Parenting Contracts.
 - Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the school offering the parent the opportunity to enter into a parenting contract following a pupil's truancy under section 19 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (with The Governing Body).
- Penalty Notices issued by the school.
 - Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the school issuing a penalty notice under section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (by Headteachers and Deputy and Assistant Heads authorised by them).
- Parenting orders or penalty notices can also be issued by the LA.

- Prosecution by the LA on behalf of the school.

We will always consider every case on an individual basis, but the following also apply:

Accepted medical evidence for absences of one day or less:

(School Office can photocopy the evidence)

- Doctor's or Hospital appointment card from surgery reception showing date and child's name.
- Letter showing appointment date and child's name.
- Copy of prescription showing date of issue and child's name.
- Copy of medication box/pack showing date of issue and child's name.

For longer periods of absence:

- Letter from recognised health professional (including mental health) advising of need for absence, hospitalisation or long-term treatment.
- We may also request permission to contact the child's GP or other health professional to confirm the causes of absence.

Signed:

S L Gaston, Head Teacher

P James, Chair of Governors

Date: 10/7/2017

Appendices

Attendance Officer Letters to be sent off in the following order, after bi-weekly monitoring by HoKS/LMs etc:-

Letter 1 – Under 96% attendance recorded in bi-weekly monitoring meeting.

Letter 2– No improvement since Letter 1 following bi-weekly monitoring.

Letter 3– Invitation to Attendance Panel due to lack of improvement in attendance since Letter 2.

Letter 4 –GP consent form due to lack of improvement in attendance/medical concerns since Letter 3.

Letter 5 – Penalty Notice letter due to 10 consecutive incidences of absence from school.

Letter 6 - Parent's application form for planned absence from school (holiday/sporting activity).

Letter 7 –Planned absence – positive response from school.

Letter 8 –Planned absence – negative response from school.

Letter 9 – Absence for holiday take without consent.

Letter 10 – Letter of congratulations for improved attendance following bi-weekly monitoring.

LETTER 1– UNDER 96% ATTENDANCE

DATE

NAME & ADDRESS

DEAR.....

Under 96% Attendance

I am writing to you to express concern regarding the number of absenceshas had from school.

.....'s current level of attendance stands at% which is lower than the school expects it to be. It is a fact that if a student improves their overall attendance, they will improve their overall attainment.

At Fairfield High School we encourage all students to attain an attendance level of 96% or above, in order that they can gain the most benefit from their education. As a guideline – an attendance level of 80% means that, on average, the student is missing one day of school each week. Over a school year, this means eight weeks of absence. If this level of absence was maintained across years 9, 10 and 11 by one student, this would mean that they had missed half a school year out of a possible three years.

There are a variety of reasons why any student might be absent from school, either for authorised or unauthorised reasons, but it is the responsibility of the parent in all cases to ensure that their son/daughter attends school on a regular basis. If there are reasons for poor attendance it is important that these be addressed as quickly as possible to ensure students are not missing out on their education.

If you do have any concerns about your child's absences, then please do not hesitate to contact the school. Please note any College references always request details about a student's punctuality and level of attendance.

We will continue to monitor 's attendance, and will be back in touch if it does not improve.

Yours sincerely,

HoKS

LETTER 2 –NO IMPROVEMENT SINCE LETTER 1.

DATE

NAME & ADDRESS

Dear

Under 96% Attendance – no improvement

Since last writing to you regarding’s attendance we have not yet seen a suitable improvement.

Consequently, over the next six weeks.....’s attendance must improve. If this does not happen we will ask you to attend a meeting with the Attendance Panel in school to discuss this matter. If you have any reasons why you think this will not be possible to achieve, please contact the school office immediately. It is your responsibility that you inform the school of any absence during this period.

We hope that this will not be necessary and that instead we will see a significant improvement in’s school attendance.

Yours sincerely,

HoKS

LETTER 3– INVITATION TO ATTENDANCE PANEL

DATE

NAME & ADDRESS

Dear

Attendance Panel

Following our letter to you earlier this term regarding your child’s level of attendance, we regret to inform you that’s attendance has not improved to the required 96% and is currently at.....%

Therefore you are required to attend a meeting at the school on at

Please complete the attached reply slip to confirm your attendance at the meeting.

Our Governor in charge of Attendance will be present at this meeting to discuss the issues affecting your child’s attendance and discuss strategies for an Action Plan to resolve these issues to avoid any further action from the Local Authority.

Yours sincerely,

HoKS

.....

Invitation to an Attendance Panel

Child’s name Date

Attendance Panel on At

I/we have received a letter regarding the invitation to the Attendance Panel and confirm that I/we are able/are not able to attend. (Please delete as appropriate).

Signed Date

If you are not able to attend, please can you give an indication of when you are available below:-

Date Time

Date Time

LETTER 4– GP CONSENT and PERMISSION TO CONSULT MEDICAL PRACTITIONER

Dear

Re: GP Consent

We are concerned that..... attendance has fallen below the National Guideline of 95%. Currentlyattendance is%. Poor attendance will only have a negative influence on your child's education and could result in an intervention, leading to penalty notices or fines.

The government's guideline for attendance is 95%. Since the beginning of the academic year has missedregistration sessions.has also been marked as late for..... registration sessions. We understand that there may be medical reasons as to whyhas not been able to be in school and we are formally requesting that absences due to illness are covered by a doctor's note, signed by your GP, stating thatis too unwell to attend school.

If for any reason you are unable to provide evidence of a medical appointment then I have enclosed a medical consent form for you to complete and return to me. This will be sent to your GP and will allow me to speak to him/her regardingability to attend school. This consent does not authorise me to gain specific information regarding your child's health nor their medical records. It will only give me the GP's opinion, as to whetherwas unfit to attend school on medical grounds. If the doctor is unable to confirm any absence on medical grounds then the absences will be unauthorised.

Failure to return this form or provide doctor's notes for absences will result in the absences being unauthorised which may lead to legal action being taken against you.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please contact me at school.

Yours sincerely

HoKS

LETTER 4 Continued – GP CONSENT and PERMISSION TO CONSULT MEDICAL PRACTITIONER

PERMISSION TO CONSULT MEDICAL PRACTITIONER

RE:

DOB:

I, _____, the parent/carer of the above named child hereby give permission for Pippa Hart, on behalf of Fairfield High School, to consult the Medical Practitioner named below (or other Medical Professional at the same Practice) about the state of health of _____ as it relates to their ability to attend SCHOOL on a regular basis.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONER INFORMATION	
DOCTOR NAME
POSITION
ADDRESS*

SIGNED
	<i>Parent/Carer</i>
*Please include name of the hospital/surgery, where applicable	

LETTER 5– PENALTY NOTICE LETTER

Date

Dear

Re:

Following on from previous letters sent to you requesting medical evidence forabsence from school we would like to inform you that we will now be pursuing a penalty notice through the local authority.

..... attendance is now%.This is below the government guidelines of 95%. Over that last 26 weeks we have notedunauthorised absences

If you are able to provide evidence of a medical appointment please forward this to the school office as soon as possible, however if the doctor is unable to confirm any absence on medical grounds then the absences will be unauthorised.

Failure to return this evidence for absences will result in the absences being unauthorised which may lead to legal action being taken against you.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please contact me at school.

Yours sincerely

HoKS

Accepted Evidence :
(School Office can photocopy the evidence)

*Doctor’s or Hospital appointment card from surgery reception showing date and child’s name.

*Letter showing appointment date and child’s name.

LETTER 6– HOLIDAY REQUEST FORM



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ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL REQUEST FORM ACCOMPANYING NOTES

Fairfield has a statutory obligation to monitor attendance and report on it to the Department for Education. The *minimum* attendance level expected is 95%; the expectation for Outstanding schools is 98%+. Absence from school can seriously disrupt your child's learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away but they also have to simultaneously catch up and keep up on their return. This leads to a risk of underachievement which together we should be trying to avoid.

10 days of absence from school means 50 missed lessons and an otherwise 100% attendance record will drop to 94.7% over an academic year.

Therefore, and in accordance with the local authority's policy on attendance, we will not ordinarily authorise an absence for any holiday taken during term time.

We may consider authorising an absence for holiday during term time if there are **very exceptional circumstances**. Examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- time taken after a traumatic event e.g. a family bereavement
- Where a parent's/carer's employer dictates the dates when holidays can be taken
- Specific personal or family circumstances which make absence unavoidable.

We will not normally authorise holidays that are taken because of cost and we will not normally authorise absence for students in years 10 or 11.

The continued high expectations on students to achieve national standards at the end of Year 11 mean that absence is inappropriate unless it is completely unavoidable.

Any intended absence should be discussed with the Head Teacher or Head of Key Stage.

REQUEST TO TAKE A CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Please complete this form, giving brief but specific details of the requested absence.

I would like to take my child..... (name)

Tutor group:

out of school from

to Number of days:

I am requesting this absence during term time because:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

(Please give as much detail as possible, including copies of official work schedules etc.)

Signed (parent/carer)

Date:.....

Name of parent/carer

This form must be completed and returned to Fairfield High School Attendance Officer no less than two weeks before the planned absence.



LETTER 7– PLANNED ABSENCE– POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM SCHOOL

Dear parent/carer

Re: Tutor Group

Current attendance %

Further to your recent request for leave of absence:

Leave of absence is authorised for the following date(s):

Please ensure that your child returns to school promptly following the absence.

Signed: *SL Gaston.* (Head Teacher) Date:



LETTER 8- PLANNED ABSENCE – NEGATIVE RESPONSE FROM SCHOOL

Dear parent/carer

Re: Tutor Group

Current attendance %

Further to your recent request for leave of absence, I regret to inform you that the leave of absence is unauthorised due to

I am sorry to disappoint you on this occasion, but I am sure that you will support the school in insisting of high levels of attendance for all students.

Signed: *SL Gaston.* (Head Teacher) Date:

LETTER 9–HOLIDAY TAKEN WITHOUT SCHOOL CONSENT

Accepted Evidence:

(School Office can photocopy the evidence)

*Doctor's or Hospital appointment card from surgery reception showing date and child's name.

*Letter showing appointment date and child's name.

*Copy of prescription showing date of issue and child's name.

*Copy of medication box/pack showing date of issue and child's name.

Dear

Re:

Information has been received at the school strongly suggesting that you have taken your children on holiday during term time This would constitute an unauthorised holiday and if the absence amounts to 10 sessions (5 days) or more a referral would then be made to Herefordshire Council. Their policy is to issue each person with parental responsibility a Penalty Notice for £60.00 for each child absent from schooling.

If this information is not correct it is requested that you provide the school with evidence to confirm that we have been misinformed. Medical evidence from the GP would be appropriate.

If for any reason you are unable to provide evidence of a medical appointment then I have enclosed a medical consent form for you to complete and return to the school. This will be sent to your GP and will allow me to speak to him/her regarding’s ability to attend school. This consent does not authorise school to gain specific information regarding your child’s health nor their medical records. It will only give the GP’s opinion, as to whetherwas unfit to attend school on medical grounds. If the doctor is unable to confirm any absence on medical grounds then the absences will be unauthorised.

Failure to return this form or provide doctor’s notes for absences will result in the absences being unauthorised which may lead to legal action being taken against you for unauthorised holiday.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely

HoKS

10th LETTER TO PARENTS —LETTER OF CONGRATULATIONS FOLLOWING IMPROVED ATTENDANCE

Dear

Improvement in school attendance

Since last writing to you regarding’s attendance, we have seen a suitable/significant improvement over the last few weeks. His/her attendance is now at%.

Consequently, we would like to congratulateon reaching this level of attendance. It is important to note that there is a strong link between academic success and attendance and therefore this should have a positive impact of’s achievements in school.

If we can support you and further in maintaining a good level of attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

HoKS