

Fairfield Spencer Academy

Attendance Policy - Pupils

Statement

At Fairfield Spencer Academy we believe that regular attendance at school is important to ensure the best possible outcomes for all our children. We support the view that every lesson counts and so encourage our children to attend every session possible.

At Fairfield Spencer Academy our school day begins and finishes at the following times:

8.30am & 3.00pm for Years 3 & 4

8.40am & 3.10pm for Years 1, 2 & 5

8.50am & 3.20pm for EYFS & Year 6

Gates will close at 8.55am and 3.25pm

Parents' Responsibilities

Under section 7 of the 1966 Education Act, a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs that a child might have.

School's Responsibilities

It is the school's responsibility to regularly monitor school attendance and to inform parents and governors of their findings.

All schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the children missing in Education Officer.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Absence

- All absences should be notified by a parent or carer, either by phone, email, class dojo, letter or visit to school before 9.00am
- Reasons for a child's absence cannot be accepted from:
 - A neighbour
 - A sibling
 - A peer
 - The child themselves upon their return to school
- We operate a first day calling system. This means that if a child is reported as absent after the registers have closed in the morning, and the school has not been made aware by the parent/carers of the reason for absence, the school will contact the parent/carers to ascertain the reason for their child's absence.
- If the parent/carers is unable to be contacted by phone then a text message will be sent asking them to contact us as soon as possible.
- If we are still unable to contact a parent/carers we will call other contacts who are on our system to ascertain a reason for absence
- If the parent/carers does not respond to the text message and the other contacts are not available, in some circumstances a home visit will be made.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school:

Acceptable Reasons for Absence

- Religious observance
- Illness or injury
- Hospital, doctor or dentist appointments which cannot be made out of school time (proof of appointments required where possible).
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. sudden injury, serious illness or death of a close relative. (However, we will expect the parent to make suitable arrangements for their child to attend school as soon as possible.)

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given:

Unacceptable Reasons for Absence

- Treatment for head lice
- Days off for shopping, haircuts or looking after younger siblings
- Visiting friends and relatives, or days out
- Holidays
- Oversleeping
- Parent/carer attending an appointment and taking the child with them. Wrap around care is available with our external provider Energy Kidz
- Absences which have never been properly explained

Absence due to Family Holiday

The school are unable to authorise any holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances surrounding them “Exceptional” circumstances are being referred to as unique and/or a one-off situation which is unlikely to arise in the future.

If the criteria shown below are met, the absence will be unauthorised but no further action will be taken. If the criteria are not met, the absence will be unauthorised and the school will request the Local Authority to issue an Educational Penalty Notice if the level of absence is above 6 sessions/3 days in total over a 6-week rolling period. The Educational Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent of each child.

- Your child’s attendance is not below 93% at the time of the application
- The absence is for no more than 5 consecutive school days
- No unauthorised absence recorded for the current academic year
- Your child has not received a letter this academic year confirming all absence are unauthorised due to concerns with low attendance

If the school has evidence that the parent has removed the child from the school for the purpose of a holiday during term time without authorisation, and the level of absence is above 6 sessions/3 days in total over a rolling 6-week period and the criteria as stated are not met, then the school will request the Local Authority to issue an Educational Penalty Notice to each parent of each child to whom unauthorised absence applies.

A request for leave of absence for a holiday during term time must be requested to the school 2 weeks prior to the first date of requested leave. If we receive absence requests out of this time frame and decline the leave of absence following this policy, parents will still receive the Penalty Notice.

If there is a delay returning from an unauthorised holiday booked during term time, all additional days taken will be unauthorised. This may result in a Penalty Notice being issued if the absence then increases to above 6 sessions/3 days.

The Local Authority will determine in some cases whether to issue a Penalty Notice or take straight to Prosecution. Please refer to the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1) or 444(1A).

Attendance Support

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties with attendance should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact Family Services themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

The school or the parent may refer the child to the Family Services at the County Council. Officers will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Unauthorised Absence

Where no reason for absence has been notified and we have been unable to contact a parent/carer to authorise a child's absence or received a letter upon the child's return to school, such absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Once a child has reached above 6 sessions/3 days unauthorised absence over a rolling 6-week period, the school can issue a warning letter. The letter will make it clear that any further absence may result in the issuing of an Educational Penalty Notice to each parent for each child to whom persistent absence applies.

Persistent Absence

- Persistent absenteeism is 90% and below.
- Parents/carers of children with attendance at 93% or below will receive a letter notifying them of our concerns regarding attendance. If attendance continues to decline, further action will be taken.
- Below 90% (or at the discretion of the Principal due to concerns) - parents may receive a letter to say all future absences are unauthorised due to persistent absence.
- In these cases the Local Authority will also consider what services or measures may be required to prevent or reduce further unauthorised absence. The Local Authority will determine in some cases whether to issue a Penalty Notice or take straight to Prosecution.

Late Attendance

Punctuality is of utmost importance. Parents and children arriving late will be requested to sign the punctuality register, noting down the reason for being late and any learning missed due to lateness. Children who arrive late will be provided with work to complete to ensure that any missed learning is completed prior to the start of the following school day.

Gates close at 8:55am.

A child will be deemed late ("L") if they arrive as shown below for the morning session or after 12:50pm (EYFS/KS1) 1:20pm (KS2) for the afternoon session.

Years 3 & 4:

"L" after 8.50am and "U" after 9.10am

Years 1, 2 & 5

"L" after 9.00am and "U" after 9.20am

EYFS 7 Year 6

"L" after 9.10am and "U" after 9.30am

If a child is repeatedly late the parent/carer will receive a letter informing them of this. Significant lateness or a pattern of lateness will be reported to the Principal.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

- 98% target whole school.
- Classes with the best weekly attendance will receive an attendance certificate
- Attendance is also a key feature on all school reports these go out 3 times a year.
- Letters are sent to parents when we see an improvement in either lates or attendance.
- Attendance will be graded as follows:

98-100% Excellent!	96%- 97.9% Good	90.1% - 95.9% Needs to improve	90% or below Very worrying
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Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Attendance Leaders, who will discuss attendance and meet with parents below 90%. The Principal, will make decisions regarding fixed Penalty Notices.