

Dorset Education Partnership



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy first adopted

October 2007

To be reviewed 3 yearly

Reviewed

February 2011

Reviewed

April 2014

Reviewed

Revised Feb 2016

Reviewed

Reviewed

Reviewed

Reviewed

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **FERNDOWN UPPER SCHOOL**

Ferndown Upper School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all students and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all students. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or careers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Each year the school will set attendance/absence targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

#### **Promoting attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the student, where all parties value education to enable success in later life.

The Home/School agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

We will ensure that our students are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them.

#### **Leave of absence in term time**

It is school policy, in line with statutory guidance in the Education (Pupil Registration) England amendment Regulations 2013, that leave of absence during term time will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a student's potential achievement. If the absence is for exceptional circumstances; parents must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence.

#### **School Procedures**

Any student who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education.

## **Registers**

The registers are taken by tutors in the morning at 8.30am and in the afternoon at 12.10pm by subject teachers. These are taken electronically and recorded on SIMS. When tutors are absent the cover supervisor will ask other staff members to take the register.

## **Lateness**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.30am.

Students arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late before registers close unless there is an acceptable explanation. **Students arriving after this time will sign in at the Pastoral office**, their names and tutor group will be recorded along with the reason for being late.

Late detentions will be run by the school for students who have three late marks in a given period for no appropriate reason.

## **First Day Absence**

Parents are asked to call on each day of absence (01202 871243), unless signed off for a specific period by a doctor.

Attendance Administrators will phone, text or email the parent/carer, asking for a reason for absence on each day of any absence that has not been reported.

All information is collated by the Pastoral Team.

The Pastoral team will continue to make contact with parents if no information is forthcoming.

## **Ten Days Absence**

A report will be sent to the Local Authority in respect of any student who is absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority. (This is a legal requirement). The school report will include details of the action that they have taken.

## **Absence notes**

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept on the student's file and any other communication entered onto SIMS.

## **Frequent or persistent absence**

The Pastoral Team are responsible for tracking absence and will notify the designated member of the Senior Leadership Team where there are concerns. In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible by:

- a) 1<sup>st</sup> Letter sent home expressing concern re. absence. See Appendix 4.
- b) Invitation to a meeting
- c) 2<sup>nd</sup> letter sent home expressing concern re. absence. See Appendix 5.
- d) Referral to Locality Social Work Team.
- e) CAF, TAF, referral to CAMHS or other external agencies
- f) Home visit by senior member of staff
- g) Referral to Local Authority Attendance officer

## Welcome Back

Where students have a prolonged absence from school through illness etc, the Pastoral Team will collect work from subject staff to forward to the student. Where appropriate, reduced timetables or other accommodations will be made to support the return to school.

## Attendance Awards

The school will reward students who have good attendance by notifying parents by letter and inviting the student to special celebration events.

### Categorisation of Absence

**Any student who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.**

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

#### 1. Unauthorised Absence

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

#### 2. Authorised Absence

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

#### 3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

**Note Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- College and job interviews etc

If a student is receiving education off site or is attending at a school where they are dual registered with, the school will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

#### The registration system

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present

<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

### **Record preservation**

We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years.

### **Register Security**

All registers are taken on SIMS and data backed up and kept securely.

### **Attendance Target**

Our schools targets is an attendance rate of 95% or above.

Any pupil with attendance below 90% (previously 85%) over the school year is known as a persistent absentee, whatever the reason for the absences. The DfE has indicated that the level of absence that defines a child as being classed as PA may be reduced in future years.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **THE LAW**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
- [b] To any special needs he may have.  
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school. Further information on a **CHILD MISSING from EDUCATION** can be found on page 10 of the DfE document 'Keeping Children safe in Education' – July 2015.

#### **Register and Admission Roll keeping**

The legal requirements are found in:  
The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

#### **Attendance Targets**

The legal requirements are found in:  
The Education (School Attendance Targets)(England) Regulations 2007

#### **Guidance documents on attendance.**

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website.

## **APPENDIX 2.**

### **ATTENDANCE ADMINISTRATION**

#### **Daily**

##### **Morning Procedure:**

1. Clear all messages from answer phone.
2. Check e mails for information from parents or Tutors – re attendance/absence.
3. Pastoral Office enter attendance codes
4. Pastoral Office enter 'lates'
5. SIMS registers checked for 'N's
6. Pastoral Office contact parents where appropriate

##### **Afternoon Procedure:**

1. Check registers for 'N's
2. Update registers accordingly.
3. Pastoral Office deal with unexplained absences with interventions and sanctions as required.

#### **Supporting Administration**

##### **Weekly:**

1. 'Lates' report sent to tutors for investigation, intervention and sanctions as required.
2. Reports run for <85% and <90% attendance for intervention by Pastoral Managers as required.

##### **Monthly:**

Letters sent home (letter 1 or 2 as required) to students with Less than 90% Attendance – informing parents of the low % and asking for evidence of all medical Appointments, for future authorisation.

##### **Half Termly**

Unexplained 'N's investigated and dealt with.

##### **Termly**

Attendance % included in Progress Reports; any issues arising dealt with PMs.

## APPENDIX 3



West Moors  
Middle  
School



St Mary's CE VC First School

Ferndown Upper  
School



July 2013

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Government states that any attendance level below 95% is unsatisfactory. Any absence from school, other than planned educational activities, will affect a young person's academic achievement, which will in turn have a negative effect on life-chances. Whenever we look at students who are failing to achieve their potential and are falling behind, there is always a link with poor attendance. Once students have fallen behind, catching up can be very difficult and sometimes impossible, particularly in the early years of school when the children are learning to read, write and understand the basic rules of mathematics. Absence in later years of education always affects exam results and can cause problems with references for colleges, universities, employers etc.

Parents are legally obliged to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time and schools are obliged to do all they can to ensure that happens. We have a duty to inform you that from September 2013, the Law relating to school attendance gets much tougher and the amendment to the 2006 Regulations state;

***“Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances”.***

The County Council have recently issued the following statement in relation to this:

*Dorset County Council Children's Services Directorate fully supports schools in expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school on a regular*



*basis. Any time away from school can have a significant impact on educational attainment, success in later life and longer term health and well-being.*

*Dorset County Council will be supporting all schools in ensuring the law is upheld. In law parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance at school. Therefore any unauthorised absence, such as taking holidays in term time, can result in a Fixed Term Penalty Notice. Failure to pay a Fixed Term Penalty Notice may result in a criminal conviction and a fine in the Magistrates Court of up to £1000.*

Please do not ask for any holiday leave to be granted; Headteachers are not allowed to do it. Any unauthorised absence stays on a student's record. From September 2013 the penalty notice issued to parents failing to ensure regular attendance at school will be £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days and this allows Local Authorities to act faster on prosecutions. Where there are serious concerns about attendance, a referral will be made to Locality Social Workers.

We are sorry if this all sounds very harsh, but that is the law and it is important that you understand the legal responsibilities schools have to uphold it as we would not want there to be any misunderstanding.

If your child has good attendance (many have 100%) none of this will ever be of concern to you. We also understand that children do get ill, but the school must be notified of any illness absence. and must be satisfied that it is genuine. If we have any concerns or attendance drops below an acceptable level, we have to ask for documentary evidence from a medical professional to confirm that the absence is genuine.

If there is ever an 'exceptional circumstance' that you would like to apply for leave of absence for, please make the request in writing as far in advance as possible so that the matter can be carefully considered by the Headteacher.

Yours sincerely,

## APPENDIX 4

«date\_of\_printing»

«salutation»  
«address\_block»

«forename» «surname» «reg»

Dear «salutation»

### Concern about attendance

I am writing to you because I am concerned that «forename»'s attendance has dropped below 95% since the start of this academic year. Students who have poor attendance at school always underachieve in their exams, and this damages future education and employment prospects.

The Government regards 95% attendance as the minimum for 'satisfactory' and even this means two weeks of school are missed in a year. Most employers would be very concerned at that amount of absence.

I appreciate that you may have already informed us as the reason(s) for this absence and that there may well be a very good reason for it, however, we will continue to monitor «forename»'s attendance very closely and look forward to an immediate improvement.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you wish to discuss this matter or if you feel there is anything we can do to support you and your child.

Many thanks for your support.

Yours sincerely



Mrs G Milsom & Mrs J Edwards  
**Pastoral Managers**

## APPENDIX 5

«date\_of\_printing»

«salutation»  
«address\_block»

«forename» «surname» «reg»

Dear «salutation»

### **Persistent absence**

I am very concerned that in spite of my previous communication there has been no improvement in «forename»'s attendance which is currently \_\_\_\_\_%.

Even though we may be aware of the reasons to date for «forename»'s absence, which we are grateful for you informing us of, we are obliged to inform you when your child's attendance has fallen below this level.

This undoubtedly means that your child's future education and employment prospects are being damaged.

If we can support you in any way or you would like to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

In the meantime however, we have been instructed by the Education Welfare Service that we cannot authorise any absences unless one of the following is provided:

- A doctor's note for days off sick.
- A photocopy of any prescriptions issued by the doctor.
- An appointment card for dental treatment.
- An appointment card for medical appointments
- Evidence (letters from Social Services etc) for any other time off school.

Please note that any absence which is not substantiated by any of the above will be noted as unauthorised and this could be used as evidence in the event of any future prosecution.

If «forename» is absent in the future, please could you call on the attendance line (01202 871243) before 9am and leave a message following the instructions for reporting a student absence.

I am sure that we can count on your support and we look forward to an immediate improvement in attendance. However, if this does not happen I will have to ask you to come in for a meeting; if necessary a Senior member of staff will make a home visit. We will also have no option but to refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service which could result in legal action; I would stress though, that we are anxious to support you and «forename» and avoid this.

Yours sincerely



Mrs G Milsom & Mrs J Edwards  
**Pastoral Managers**