

Dorset Education Partnership



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

<u>Policy first adopted</u>	<u>October 2007</u>
<u>To be reviewed 3 yearly</u>	
<u>Reviewed</u>	February 2011
<u>Reviewed</u>	April 2014
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<u>Reviewed</u>	
<u>Reviewed</u>	
<u>Reviewed</u>	

## **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.

We will ensure that our students and parents are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them in an annual letter and in meetings that take place during the school year.

#### **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 on G4S 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 front office**, their names and tutor group will be recorded along with the reason for being late. Students who are 5 minutes late will be given a C1 for lateness, students who are 10 minutes late will be given a C2. Those who miss the whole of tutor time will be given a C3 detention. Students who arrive late and miss a significant part of lesson 1 may be placed in isolation for truancy if they have no good reason for being late. After tutor time students will have to sign in and out of school in the pastoral office.

Late detentions will be run by the school for students who have the equivalent of 5 negative points for lateness in one half term 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.

Pastoral managers 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 G4S.

## 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) Invitation to a panel meeting
- e) Penalty notice or prosecution

## 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 100% attendance or improved attendance through rewards assemblies.

### 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 G4S and data backed up and kept securely.

### **Attendance Target**

Our schools targets is an attendance rate of 96% 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' – Sept 2016.

#### **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. Reception enter 'lates'
5. G4S 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.

##### **Half-termly:**

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.

Unexplained 'N's investigated and dealt with.

##### **Termly**

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

## APPENDIX 3 – Start of year letter

1<sup>st</sup> November 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

Ferndown Upper School are committed to ensuring the best for all our learners and are working together with parents and carers to support good attendance of students to school.

You will be aware of the importance of good school attendance in improving a young person's chance of success in life and establishing positive attitudes to life-long learning. There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Of pupils who have less than 90% attendance, only 35% achieve five or more GCSEs at grade 9-4 (A\*-C) including English and maths, but 73% of pupils who have attendance of 95% or more will achieve this.

If a child has an attendance level of 90% they will have missed one day a fortnight in school. Over a school year, this will represent four weeks of absence. If this level of absence were maintained for, a five-year period, it would mean half a school year would have been missed.

At Ferndown Upper school if we are concerned about your child's attendance we will go through the following stages: *(please note we are aware that in the first part of the year the % of attendance is oddly weighted and so we wait until the second half-term to take action)*:

Stage 1 – attendance below 95% - we will write to you with our initial concerns (some parents/carers will receive this letter this week).

Stage 2 – attendance below 90% - we will invite you into school for a meeting with one of our pastoral managers to discuss ways we can support you and your child's attendance.

Stage 3 – attendance below 85% - we will invite you to a formal panel meeting where you may be issued with a penalty notice, a parenting order or told that formal proceedings for prosecution will be taken resulting in a fine of £1,000 and a criminal record.

As you can access Go 4 Schools at any point, you have a live record of your child's attendance. If you notice that the attendance record is incorrect, please do call us and we will happily make any necessary changes.

At Ferndown Upper School, we are determined to ensure that all of our students have the opportunity to achieve success and have an excellent record of attendance. Where there is a cause for concern you will be contacted and attendance will be closely monitored. If attendance does not improve because of support, we are required by law to take further actions (as outlined above).

Please also note that the school is required by law to apply directly for a penalty notice in two situations (not using stage 1-3 outlined above):

- If you take an unauthorised holiday of 5 days or more
- If you have 5 days of unauthorised absence in a 12 week period

In these circumstances, the school may choose to issue a penalty notice directly. All holiday requests must be submitted in writing to the headteacher. He can only authorise holiday requests in exceptional circumstances. Parents, who choose to take a holiday in term time without authorisation, are likely to receive a penalty notice. Please note that penalty fines are payable by both parents and for each child in the school.



It is also important that students are in school on time. Time keeping is not only important in obtaining maximum benefit from education, it is also a key skill for adult life. Lateness is monitored by the school and also contributes to absence rates. The school is also entitled to take action (as outlined above) against students who are persistently late to school.

Whilst we understand that children do become ill on occasions, children who lose a lot of time at school can suffer in the long term from significant gaps in their learning. If a child's health continues to affect their education, we are obliged to make a referral to the school nursing team to ensure medical advice and support is provided. If your child is ill it is your responsibility to inform the school. Ferndown Upper School operates a 'first day call' system which means we will contact you to ask why your child is not in school and when they are expected to return. We need to see a doctor's note for illness of longer than 5 days. Without this medical note we will not be able to authorise the absence and you may then be liable for a penalty notice.

For further details please do look at our Attendance Policy on our website – we have adopted the Dorset Local Authority policy with small amendments.

The attendance process above is designed to identify poor attendees quickly and address the issues that are affecting their attendance. We hope that for most students their attendance will remain above 95% and so the processes outlined above will not be necessary. We want our students to be happy and successful in school and we recognise that good attendance is central to this.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Redwood  
Deputy Head

#### **APPENDIX 4 – Initial Concern letter**

Dear <NAME>

##### **<NAME> - <DOB> - Attendance Concerns**

At the beginning of the school year you received a letter from us informing you about the importance of regular school attendance and our aim to ensure good attendance for all students.

<NAME> has been identified as having attendance below 95% which means that their attendance will be closely monitored as part of our attendance process. I have enclosed a registration certificate which you can look at (this is also available on Go 4 Schools at all times and is a live version for you to see.)

You will appreciate that parents/careers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child is receiving an education. Dorset County Council advises us to inform you that parents/carers may be liable to prosecution under (s) 444 Education Act 1996 if they fail to ensure that a child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school they are registered at.

<NAME> attendance must improve, otherwise we will ask you to attend a meeting in school to discuss this matter. If <NAME> attendance does not improve following this meeting, you could receive a letter inviting you to an Attendance Panel with the school and a representative from Dorset County Council's School Attendance Service. This panel may recommend further action such as a penalty notice, further monitoring or seeking prosecution in the magistrates court.

There are many reasons why students have poor attendance. At this stage your child may have simply had three days illness in the first half term. At this stage you need to be aware that this is a high level of illness and they now need to try and be in school as much as they can. We value a working partnership with parents, therefore, if there are specific circumstances that have contributed to <NAME>'s poor attendance that you feel we haven't considered please do contact the pastoral manager for their year. The school will consider all notes/information explaining absences before deciding whether or not to authorise the absence.

Please note any sickness absences should be support with evidence such as a GPS appointment card or prescription, or hospital letter.

We hope that an invite into school or to a panel will not be necessary and that we will see a significant improvement in school attendance. It is only through excellent attendance that <NAME> will achieve all they are capable of achieving, and the best opportunity for a rewarding and prosperous adult life.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Redwood  
Deputy Head.

## **APPENDIX 5 – Invite to school meeting**

Dear <NAME>

<NAME> - DOB – School Attendance Meeting

Following our letter stating we had initial concerns over your child's attendance we regret to inform that your child's attendance has not improved to the required levels. I have included a copy of the current attendance record which is also displayed on Go 4 Schools as a live document. Students are expected to be in school for 95% of the time and your child's attendance is well below this level.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child is receiving an education and attends regularly at the school at which they are registered. You also have a responsibility to contact the school each day should they be unable to attend for any reason.

You are therefore requested to attend an Attendance Meeting at school on .....You are welcome to bring a friend or colleague to support you.

The meeting will be conducted by our pastoral manager. It is important that you attend this meeting so that any issues or concerns which may be contributing to your child's non-attendance can be discussed.

This meeting is an opportunity for the school and family to meet together to discuss why your child has poor attendance and, hopefully, to seek solutions to any problems.

Please telephone the pastoral manager for your child's year at the school on receipt of this letter to confirm whether you can attend the meeting. Please be aware that Dorset County Council Attendance Service have been informed of your child's current attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Redwood  
Deputy Head

## **APPENDIX 6 – Attendance Panel Invite**

Dear <NAME>,

<NAME> - DOB – Attendance Panel

Following our meeting regarding your child attendance in school, we regret to inform you that your child's attendance has not improved to the required level of 95%. I have included a copy of their current attendance record, which can also be viewed on Go 4 Schools as a live document at any point.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child is receiving an education and attends regularly at the school at which they are registered. You also have a responsibility to contact the school each day should they be unable to attend for any reason.

You are therefore requested to attend an Attendance Panel on .... You are welcome to bring a colleague or friend to support you.

This meeting will also be attended by the pastoral manager from the school and a representative from Dorset County Council's Attendance Service. Ferndown Upper School values the working partnership we have with parents and it is important that you attend this meeting so that any issues or concerns which may be contributing to your child's non-attendance can be discussed.

The panel can recommend several outcomes, including a further timescale for close monitoring with specific attendance targets, issuing a penalty notice or seeking prosecution in the Magistrate's Court which could result in a criminal record and a fine of £1000.

Please do call the pastoral managers on receipt of this letter to confirm your intention to attend the meeting. Dorset County Council is aware of your child's current attendance record.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Redwood  
Deputy Head



<b>Strategies To Improve Attendance:</b>		<b>Review date</b>
<b>Current Attendance</b>	<b>Target Attendance</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
<b>Any absence due to illness must be supported by medical evidence within the monitoring period.</b>		
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>
<b>Parent-</b>		
<b>School-</b>		

## School Attendance Request for Penalty Notice (Holiday)

Date .....

<b>School</b>	
<b>Name of pupil</b>	
<b>Date of birth</b>	
<b>Parent 1</b> Full name <b>Address</b>	
<b>Parent 2</b> Full name <b>Address</b>	
<b>School contact</b> <b>(Name &amp; Tel Number)</b>	
<b>Any other information</b> <b>(Including dates of holiday)</b>	

**N.B. If there are two parents with parental responsibility who you wish the letter to go to and they are not at the same address, please provide full details of both their addresses.**

**Email to: [c.r.briden@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:c.r.briden@dorsetcc.gov.uk)**

**APPENDIX 9 – Penalty Notice (Unauthorised absence)**

**School Attendance  
Request for Penalty Notice Warning Letter (Unauthorised Absence)**

**Date** .....

<b>School</b>	
<b>Name of pupil</b>	
<b>Date of birth</b>	
<b>Parent 1</b> Full name Address	
<b>Parent 2</b> Full name Address	
<b>School contact</b> (Name & Tel Number)	
<b>Social Worker</b>	
<b>Any other information</b>	

**N.B. If there are two parents with parental responsibility who you wish the letter to go to and they are not at the same address, please provide full details of both their addresses.**

**Email to: [c.r.briden@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:c.r.briden@dorsetcc.gov.uk)**





**CHILDREN'S SERVICES**  
**Referral Form for Child Missing Education**

Please complete all sections of this form

**Section 1: Core information - please complete all sections**

<b>Name</b> (include any alternatives / nicknames/AKA)	<b>Date of Birth</b>
	<b>UPN</b> (unique pupil number)
<b>School Last Attended</b>	<b>Last known address</b>
<b>Date Last Attended</b>	
<b>Name(s) of parent/carer</b>	<b>Telephone No(s)</b> Home Mobile Work

**Section 2: Referrer details**

**Referrer name:**

**Role:**

**School:**

**Phone number:**

**e-mail:**

**Section 3: Reason for referral**

What has led you to believe the child/young person is missing education?

**Section 4: Please answer yes or no to these questions then go to section 5**

Are you aware of any other school aged children in the family home?	Yes / No
Do you have any other addresses for this child/young person?	Yes / No
Have you had any contact with any adults in the family or connected to the family regarding this child?	Yes / No
Are there any other agencies involved with the family e.g. Family Support, Social Care?	Yes / No
Have you or any other professional involved with the child/young person considered completing the child sexual exploitation risk assessment tool? If yes, please advise Louise Dodds, Safeguarding Standards Advisor, 01305 221319.	Yes / No

**Section 5: Additional Information**

If you have answered Yes to any questions in section 4, give details here. Also, please add ANYTHING else, no matter how small, that might help us to find a school place for this child.

Signed ..... Designation ..... Date  
.....

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO :**

Jean Walker  
Admin Assistant - Central Support Team  
Children's Services  
West Court  
County Hall, Colliton Park  
Dorchester  
Dorset DT1 1XJ

Tel: 01305 228444 e-mail: j.k.walker@dorsetcc.gov.uk