

# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY



FEARNHILL SCHOOL

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Ratified by	
Ratified by Full Governors	
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SLT responsible:	Assistant Headteacher
Signatures:	
Chair of Governor	
Headteacher	

# Fearnhill School Attendance Policy

Previous Review- March 2013 by the Headteacher. & AIO (Attendance Improvement Officer)

## Attendance Aims

At Fearnhill, we have always had a good attendance record. Our high standards of learning can only be maintained if attendance remains high.

The aim of this policy is:

- To ensure continued high attendance
- To ensure legal obligations are met by all staff
- To ensure that staff are aware of legal obligations
- To ensure that lateness and absence are monitored
- To ensure parents are notified of concerns regarding lateness and absence
- To ensure consistency in applying rules
- To maintain our ethos of caring for the security and well being of all students

## Keeping of registers

- 1 The register is a legal document and therefore must be filled in by the Form Tutor and **not** delegated to students.
- 2 Returns are required yearly by the LA and the DfE (and more frequently by the school) to establish the authorised/unauthorised absences for each student and overall rates for the school. We issue certificates of achievement and reward trips to those with particularly good attendance records.
- 3 Registration is administered by the SIMS ATTENDANCE electronic registration.
- 4 Lesson Monitors – also administered by SIMS – these must be taken by all staff for all lessons.

Absence notes are required from students after all absences in order that they can be coded. These will be stored in Year Offices.

Student Development Leaders and attendance admin staff will monitor registers to ensure that they are correctly completed and help with any difficulties.

## Long-term absence

When a long-term absentee returns, it is important to make that student feel welcomed back. In particular, the tutor should

- check that the student has remembered where to go for lessons
- not use sarcasm in his/her welcome!
- make sure all subject staff are informed, either via briefing or a note
- monitor progress in subjects at regular intervals after return
- set aside some registration time on a regular basis for, say, the first few weeks to allow discussion of progress

## Lateness

Lateness is defined as arrival in the tutor room five minutes after the opening of the register. Registers are officially open from 8.40 a.m. and 2.05 p.m.

If students arrive in the tutor room after these times (8.45 a.m. and 2.10 p.m.) and before the register is closed they are marked present but late.

If students arrive at school after the register is closed (at the latest this is at 8.50 a.m. and 2.15 p.m.) they have to report to the office and fill in a late slip. The tutor will mark them absent but late at the next registration. This counts in the totals as an authorised absence and might include most reasons (missed bus, got up late, dog was sick). If a student arrives at school after 9.00 a.m. they are marked as absent; if there is a valid reason for the lateness the absence is authorised if not the absence is marked unauthorised for that session.

**As per our Behaviour Ladder, every late to school will result in an L1 [30 minute] detention unless there is a valid reason given.**

**As per the letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014, sent home to all parents, registers will be closed at 9.00 am in future and therefore students arriving late but before the register is closed will be annotated with a late mark. A pupil arriving after the register has closed will be marked absent with Code U which is an unauthorised absence.**

Staff are also advised to keep a special watch on lateness to lessons, especially after break. If this causes regular problems, a range of sanctions can be invoked, including making up the time at lunch times/breaks. Tutors should also be kept informed of regular lateness to lessons. Duty staff are also asked to encourage students outside to come in promptly at the end of break.

## Approved educational activities, authorised and unauthorised absence

The May 94 DfE circular "School Attendance: Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence" made clearer the precise definitions of absence which schools are to use and which they have to use as the basis of returns to the LA and to the DfE. The important thing to note is that it is the **school** - not the parents - who can authorise an absence and that: "The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification ... in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence." In practice, if a form tutor does not accept such an explanation, this should be discussed with the SDL and AIO.

## Authorised absence

The following is taken from the DfES guidance on attendance matters:

Absence can be authorised if:

- the pupil was absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school').
- the pupil was ill 'or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause'.
- 'the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs'.

- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home; and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LEA for any of the following:
  - i) the child's transport to and from school,
  - ii) boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school, and
  - iii) enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home.
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in paragraph 47 of the guidance are met.
- there is a family bereavement.
- the pupil is attending an interview with either a prospective employer or in connection with an application for a place at an institute of further or higher education or for a place at another school.
- the pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit.
- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance.
- the pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. if a pupil is attending the graduation of an older sibling).
- **Permission for leave of absence during term time, for holidays or similar activities will not be granted. Permission for leave will only be considered for wholly exceptional or unavoidable circumstances.**

### Unauthorised absence

The following is taken from the DfE regulations on attendance matters:

Absence can be unauthorised by tutors if:

- no explanation is forthcoming at all.
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or to look after siblings (the guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in exceptional circumstances).
- the pupil is shopping during school hours.
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday).
- the pupil is away from school on a family holiday.

### Approved educational activities

This category covers specific types of supervised activities undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. Activities which are to be included are:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities organised by the school
- Courses at other educational establishments

**Attendance Tracking and Monitoring Procedure:**

Please see below the procedure followed in tracking and monitoring attendance.

Please note that the school has introduced Fixed Penalty Notices and Fines as per guidelines from county.

Please note that at Fearnhill School we operate a ‘first day response’ strategy in monitoring attendance.

The AIO has monthly consultation meetings with our Attendance officers and with parents and students if and when required.

**Fearnhill School Attendance  
Tracking and Monitoring Progression Process**

Attendance below 96% → A school letter can be sent as asking for medical evidence for the absence



If no medical evidence is forthcoming and the student has 6 or more → Penalty Notice warning letter will be sent

unauthorised sessions (where a session is half a day)



If the number of unauthorised sessions reach 15



Fixed Penalty Notice warning letter will be processed.