

Field Court Junior Academy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Headteacher: Mrs Kelly Armstrong

Subject Leader: Mr Gary Street / A Clare

Written by: Mr Gary Street

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Approved: *(the below signatures are proof of policy approval)*

Signed

Head teacher Date September 2024

Signed

Trustees Date September 2024

This policy is a working document for the use of all staff and is subject to staff and governor approval.

1.1 School Intent

At Field Court Junior Academy, all our children are **“S.T.A.R.S. in the making”** and this is at the heart of our school and drives everything we do. We are driven by the philosophy that Upon leaving this school, children will have everything they need in preparation for the ‘weather’ of the wider world! This is embodied through our phrase: children will know, do and be

- They will KNOW the information and facts they need
- They will be able to DO the skills they need
- They will BE sure of who they are and secure and confident in their own personality

to be ready for the next stage of their life and educational journey.

How does this policy help us to deliver our intent and meet the aims of our School Improvement Plan?

We want all children to aspire to do their very best. Regular attendance at school ensure children receive the education they need to be as prepared as possible for the next stage of their education and their future life. This policy helps to ensure that children attend school as much as they are able to. This policy is designed to clarify expectations, promote accountability, and foster attendance.

Working together to improve school attendance

As the DfE notes, *‘Improving attendance is everyone’s business’*, and it is important that we, as your child’s school, work together in partnership with you, your family, your child, and the wider community.

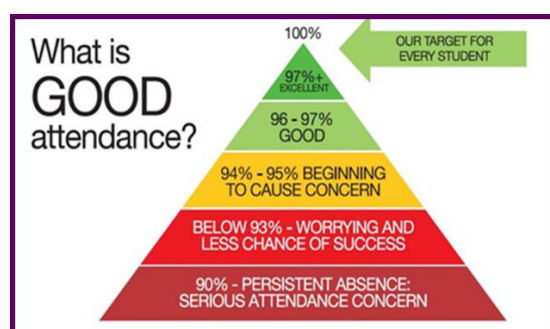
The new 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' Guidance emphasises a ‘Support First’ ethos, and recognises that *‘the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families... [It] is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.’*

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to meet their full potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

It is our aim to improve the overall attendance of children at school; to improve the children's attainment through good attendance; to ensure every pupil has access to full-time education which they are entitled to; to encourage parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time in a good state to learn; to make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school including parents, pupils, teachers and trustees.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others.



Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can authorise absence. The school will not assess all reasons as 'valid'. At Field Court Junior Academy, we expect all children to attend 100% of the time during term time. Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

- a) In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance;
- b) Prior to the engagement of external attendance support services, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupil's absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for involvement.

First Day of Absence What to do?

Parents/Carers must ensure they contact school by 8.55am to report any absence. (01452 720066)

No contact from parent/carer by 9.30
Attendance officer to contact parent/carer by 10.00 and expected return to school date given.

Contact from parent/carer by 9.30
Must give expected return to school date. Parents must contact again if they feel the child will not be able to return to school by the date given.

Child not returned by expected date
Attendance Team to contact and visit home if they are unable to make contact.

Child returns to school by expected date.

Child not returned by expected date
Attendance Team to contact and visit home if they are unable to make contact.

Child returns to school by expected date.

If any of the children placed on the 'First Day Absence' list can not be contacted or the Attendance Team is unhappy with the reason given then the Head Teacher will be informed.

Arrival and Registration

Registers are taken twice a day – 8:55am and 1:15pm. 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. If the school has not heard from the parents as to why their child is away from school, then our Attendance Officer will contact the family to establish a reason why and to ensure the parent is aware of the child's absence. The reason given will be recorded.

Lateness

The school classroom doors open at 8:40- 8:45am, as learning begins at 8:45am. Registration takes place at 8:55am. A late mark will be given after this time and up to 9:15am. If a child arrives after 8:55am., the parent must sign their child in at main reception with a time of arrival and reason for lateness. If a child arrives after 9:15am., an unauthorised absence mark will (u) be given. Persistent lateness is referred to our Attendance Officer.

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents must contact the school before 8.55am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence. When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register and the Attendance Officer will transfer this data onto SIMs where the DFE can extract any information. As part of the school's Safeguarding Procedures, our Attendance Officer will endeavour to contact the parent and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- An appointment card or verification by the doctors/dentist/ hospital may be required.
- If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- If a child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea then the child should not return to school for the next 48 hours (in accordance with PH Guidelines) after the last time that the child was sick or had the last episode of diarrhoea. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.

Parental Responsibility

In Education Law, (Section 576 of Education Act 1996), 'parent' means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who has care of a child or young person, i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

The local authority and school will need to decide who comes within the definition of

parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day-to-day responsibility for a child.

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents one parent/both parents or carer with whom the child resides. Parents are informed of their responsibility to ensure their children attend regularly. Punctuality is also stressed as lateness impacts on learning not only for the individual, but the class as a whole.

Attendance may be discussed with parents during consultation evenings.

School Responsibility – THE LAW and School Attendance

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated, each regulation applies to all schools in England.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 restricts authorised leave of absence to be for families with exceptional circumstances. The decision rests with the school and all applications for absence requests must be made in advance by the parent the pupil normally resides with.

The Senior Leadership Team and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance. The Headteacher/Governing Body holds responsibility for attendance matters, supported by the Pastoral Lead, Community Family Worker and Attendance Officer.

Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module.

It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class register twice per day at the start of each session.

The Trustees authorise absence; Field Court Junior Academy adheres to the DfE guidelines in authorising absence. Absence for any reason during term time is discouraged.

Absence known to be for the following reasons would usually be authorised:

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside school hours

If you are concerned about your child's attendance, then please contact either Mrs A Clare, Attendance Officer or Miss S Mitchell, Community Family Worker, as soon as possible so that barriers to attendance can be understood, and appropriate support can be put in place to support you, your family, and your child to prevent further absences.

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with, we will work with partners, including the local authority, to formalise and intensify the support.

The local authority has full responsibility for prosecuting parents where absence continues to be a problem.

Term Time Holidays and Unauthorised Absence

The school recognises that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and in law, have to apply for permission in advance.

Holidays in term time are not a right and will not automatically be granted unless there are 'exceptional' circumstances. Only the Headteacher can decide if it meets the school exceptional circumstance.

A request for your child to leave school during school time must be made on a *Leave of Absence Request Form*, which is available from the School Office or online from the school website. Each request for absence is considered individually.

Please note to have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time during term time does not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The date and time of the request will be looked into when considering the exceptional circumstances listed above.

Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent.

For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only a school can make an absence authorised.

Unauthorised Absences and Penalty Notices

If a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences within 10 school weeks, the pupil's parent(s)/carer(s) may receive a 'Notice to Improve' notification sent via email on behalf of the school and issued by the local authority (LA). Each day of absence is recorded as two sessions (morning and afternoon).

Unauthorised absences include:

- unauthorised absence (where there is no reasonable circumstance for the absence taking place),
- arriving late after the register has closed,
- or a combination of these with holidays taken during term time

These 10 weeks can span different terms, academic years, and even different educational settings, such as transitions to secondary school or in-year school changes. For instance, if your child misses 3 days of school for a holiday in July (6 sessions) and is late after the register closes on 4 occasions (4 sessions) between September and October, you may be issued a 'Notice to Improve' notification.

The 'Notice to Improve' notification will set out the expectations and period notice for the improvement of attendance such as 'no further unauthorised absences'. Should the expectations not be met in the improvement period, then a Penalty Notice may then be requested by the school and issued by the LA to each parent/carer responsible for the child.

Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice. In this instance, a 'Notice to Improve' notification will not be issued beforehand.

The penalty amount is increasing to £160 from September (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence). If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period, the fine is £160 and there is no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.

Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent. For example, if two adults take two children out of school, the total fines would be £640 (reduced to £320 for a first offence paid within 21days).

If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court.

We recognise that these Penalty Notices may be unpopular with families, but it is important to inform you of these changes promptly.

Nationally, Headteachers are:

- not permitted to approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances, and
- are to consider each application for a leave of absence individually before making our decision.

The law clearly expects Headteachers to enforce these penalties strictly.

The new policy also states that all schools must consider issuing Penalty Notices if the criteria is met. This is a national statutory process and will be followed by all English state funded schools.

Our revised school attendance policy in line with these requirements can be found on our website from 23rd September 2024

For other relevant legislation please see the following guidance:-

Other relevant legislation and guidance:-

[The Education Act 1996](#)

[The Children Act 1989](#)

[The Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)

[The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#)

[The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Sentencing Act 2020](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

[Relevant government guidance](#)

[Parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour](#)

[Children missing education](#)

Keeping children safe in education
Working together to safeguard children
Elective home education
Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities
Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England
Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges
Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying

Rewards

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

Whole School Incentive

Children who achieve 100% attendance each week will be rewarded on their individual attendance passport and have 5 chances across the academic year to win an individual prize after every 7 weeks (including those children with extenuating circumstances ie Covid, hospital appointments, specific medical conditions (medical appointments that can be made out of school hours are not included). Each child who achieves 100% attendance each week will warrant a gold star in the jar. Once the jar reaches a half term target of 1600 stars then a whole school attendance prize can be awarded (agreed with Mrs K Armstrong, Headteacher). These prizes will be decided by the Attendance Ambassadors.

Number of children with 100% in each year group each week will be noted on the Attendance display board by the Attendance Ambassadors. Attendance Ambassadors to assist Mrs Clare, Attendance Officer each week with the administration of stickers and stars on the attendance passports. Attendance Officer and Ambassadors to produce their own fortnightly newsletter. In addition, PA children will also be rewarded with a weekly and half termly certificate if their attendance percentage has improved.

Where positive impact is required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance.

Attendance Ambassadors

Attendance Officer to recruit Attendance Ambassadors within the school to promote and educate their peers and the wider community of how importance attendance is within school. Regular meetings to be held once a fortnight to review and discuss ideas and liaise with headteacher. Attendance Officer to create Attendance Ambassador display board to engage all members of the school community. Duties will include passport administration, deciding whole school attendance reward and creating a fortnightly newsletter. Attendance Officer to liaise with other primary schools in the area to see if they have Attendance Ambassadors to share idea.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be subject to regular review in light of changes made to legislation or the publication of new advice.