



Attendance Policy

Review Date: Autumn 2019
Monitored by: SLT

The Ferrars Academy

Attendance Policy

Every Child Matters

At The Ferrars Academy, we are committed to ensuring that each child fulfils his/her potential and develops an enjoyment for learning, which will continue into adult life. We intend our pupils to develop into enterprising adults, who contribute positively to the fabric of community life; who live healthy and safe lives and respect others. This intention is reflected in all our policies.

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. The Ferrars Academy recognises its responsibilities to ensure children are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

The law requires that children attend school for 190 days each year and every day is important. Attendance at the Academy is essential for children to gain most benefit from the learning opportunities offered to them in the classroom. The Ferrars Academy expects all children to attend **100%** of the time so that they can form and maintain friendships, fully participate in school life, enjoy the different experiences, and achieve to their potential in all their learning and activities.

Attainment is strongly linked to attendance, and research has shown that if children are to be successful learners, they must attend school regularly.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Principal and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time in their primary education, have missed two whole terms of learning.

At Ferrars we promote excellent attendance with a range of rewards and incentives and by highlighting attendance concerns as early as possible with parents/carers and, where necessary, with the Education Welfare Officer assigned to our Academy. We believe that the most important factor in promoting excellent attendance is ensuring that children are happy in the Academy and therefore want to be in the Academy every day.

The Academy has an annual attendance target set in conjunction with the Local Authority which is monitored by the Governors. It is expected that the whole school community will work together to achieve this target.

Aims

We aim to.....

- Improve children's achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the Academy
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually
- Equip children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development
- Monitor children's attendance when it falls below 95%
- Identify, report and review cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness
- Work and support parents/carers in improving their child's attendance and punctuality
- Discourage leave of absence in term time with clear guidelines and specific criteria for authorisation
- Support children who have been experiencing any difficulties at home which are preventing good attendance
- Follow up all unauthorised absences
- Work in partnership with the Educational Welfare Service regarding any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve

Registration Times

Nursery

Morning Session

Children to be in Nursery at 8:30am

Afternoon Session

Children to be in Nursery at 12:30pm

All Day Session

Children to be in Nursery at 8:30am

Main School

Reception Classes will be allowed into their classrooms between 8:35am and 8:45am during the first half of the Autumn term. After the October half term they will follow the same procedure as the rest of the school and assemble in their class lines on the playground.

Year 1 & 2 Classes should assemble in their class lines on the playground at 8:40am where they will be collected by their teachers at 8:45am.

Collection Times

Nursery

Morning Session

Children to be collected from Nursery at 11:30am.

Afternoon Session

Children to be collected from Nursery at 3:30pm.

All day Session

Children to be collected from Nursery at 3:30pm.

Main School

Reception children to be collected from the teachers on the playground at 3:10pm.

Year 1 & 2 children to be collected from the teachers on the playground at 3:15pm.

If you are late collecting your child from the playground you must report to the main school office where you will need to sign your child out.

Illness

Whether to keep your child off school due to illness can be a difficult judgment call to make, especially first thing in the morning. Sometimes it's obvious that a child needs to be at home in bed but very often it's not so clear. *"Will I be criticised for sending a coughing, sneezing child into school?"* If in doubt, send them into school, particularly for minor ailments such as coughs, headaches, runny noses etc. Then as the day progresses, if they are too unwell to complete the school day the Academy will send them home. This not only encourages resilience but says to your child how important school is. Parents/carers who adopt this approach are unlikely to have a problem as their child gets older as the value for good attendance has been instilled at an early age.

Where absence cannot be avoided, for example, where a child is too unwell to attend the Academy, it is important that the time missed is kept to a minimum. We expect parents/carers to ensure that their G.P. is involved in any ongoing medical issues which cause regular absence and to keep the Academy informed of such matters. If absence from the Academy is for 3 or more days (6 sessions for the main school/3 sessions for Nursery) it would be advised that medical evidence is provided in order for the absence to be authorised. Any absences after three days without medical evidence will be unauthorised by the Academy.

Procedures to follow when your child is absent from school

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. The Academy considers this a safeguarding issue so that all parties know your child is safe. Notification of a child's absence should be done by 9:30am on the first day of absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents/carers with reasons for the child's absence. This

information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Academy has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Lateness

Nursery - Morning and All Day Sessions

Children arriving after 8:30am will be marked as late

Nursery - Afternoon Sessions

Children arriving after 12:30pm will be marked as late

Main School

Children arriving after 8:45am must be brought to the main school office where they are to be signed in by their parent/carer. This will result in a late mark being recorded.

A child arriving after 9:00am will be given an unauthorised late mark. Any unauthorised lateness (8 sessions or more) will result in a warning which could lead to a fine

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve. Children arriving in the classroom late feel anxious and uncomfortable and also cause disruption to their class.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the Academy will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues. Parents/carers should always contact the Academy if they become aware their child will be late.

Authorised Absence

An absence is recorded as authorised when a child has been away from the Academy for a legitimate reason and the Academy has received notification from a parent or carer.

Only the Academy can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents/carers will be recorded as authorised

Absence from the Academy will be authorised for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness.
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (although these should be taken out of school time where possible) **an appointment card or medical letter will need to be provided to the school office for the absence to be authorised.**
- Days off for religious observance, on the day of the recognised festival only up to a maximum of 2 days per academic year (Application for Term Time Leave will need to be completed)

- Exceptional circumstances - at the discretion of the Principal only.
- External examinations
- Where traveller children are travelling with their parents as part of their trade and state a date of return
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces and prison visits.

There may be other reasons for absence, which could be recorded as authorised, at the discretion of the Principal

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is recorded as unauthorised when a child is away from the Academy without prior permission. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from the Academy without good reason, even when a parent or carer has notified the school.

Following 8 unauthorised absences, a warning notice will be issued by the Education Welfare Officer, which could lead to a fixed fine if there is no improvement.

The following examples are some of the reasons which an absence will not be authorised:

- Shopping (this includes shopping for school items, such as shoes)
- A parent or sibling illness
- Remaining at home because a sibling is not attending school
- Late after registers close
- Birthdays
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Resting after a late night or recovering from a long weekend
- Getting up late and not coming in for the remainder of the day/session
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Lack of childcare provision before or after the Academy
- Difficulties in transporting a child to or from the Academy
- Child is reluctant to go to school

Parents/carers must talk to the Academy as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Term Time Leave

We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term-time leave for their child. However, it is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time.

Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning that is missed. Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.

For these reasons we strongly discourage parents from applying for term-time leave to go on holiday with their child/ren. The law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

Requests for term-time leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a holiday.

Term-time leave will not be authorised by the Principal except in extremely rare circumstances, for example a family bereavement. Where possible, proof will be required upon return to have absence authorised i.e. Death Certificate/Airline flight tickets.

In assessing an application for term-time leave, the following factors will be considered by the Principal.

- Previous Attendance - Minimum 97% attendance is required for the previous 12 months.
- Previous leave in term-time - At least one full academic year with no leave requests must have passed.
- The time of year - Year 2 (due to SATS examinations and transition to junior school, applications for term-time leave during this year will not be authorised).

An application for term-time leave must be fully completed and returned to school for consideration prior to the leave being booked, and a minimum of 2 weeks before the leave commences. You will receive a response confirming if the request will be authorised or not.

These applications will be considered by the Principal. If a leave request has not been authorised and the holiday is still taken, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may result in a fixed rate penalty notice being issued by the Education Welfare Service, Luton Borough Council.

If you are travelling abroad, you must supply the Academy with your booking information and confirmation of your return flight tickets, such as bringing the flight tickets into the school office for us to copy prior to travelling. If you need to travel abroad with your child in an emergency you must supply the Academy with your booking information and flight tickets upon your return.

Failure to return to school on the date expected

If there is a reason which delays the child in returning to school the parent/carer must inform the Academy immediately. The Academy will require evidence of this issue, for example from the child's UK doctor to say they have received medical attention. Each case will be assessed individually and medical evidence from abroad will not be accepted routinely as evidence that a child was unable to attend school.

Removal from Roll (Admission Register)

A pupil can be removed from roll if:

- A child has had 20 days continuous unauthorised absence
- If a child is taken term time leave which has been authorised by the school, but the child fails to return on the agreed date, any extra time absent from school will be counted as unauthorised
- If a child fails to return within ten days of the expected date of return, then the Academy may remove the child from the school roll and notify the Local Authority accordingly.

Unauthorised absence and persistent lateness is considered as serious in Nursery and could also result in a child's place being withdrawn

Attendance Monitoring

Regular meetings are held with the Principal to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings including:

- letters sent to parents/carers highlighting attendance/punctuality concerns
- home visits to discuss attendance issues
- meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers
- a referral to or intervention by the Education Welfare Service if poor attendance/punctuality persists

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, if their attendance is less than 90% regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised.

Education Welfare Service / Education Welfare Officer

The role of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is to work closely with both the Academy and families to resolve attendance issues. The EWO works in a multi-agency environment to help improve attendance.

The EWO visits the Academy to check and monitor attendance, carrying out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the Academy has a responsibility to make a referral to the EWO. However action is automatically carried out by the EWO regarding persistent absentees (PA's) and the Penalty Notice Process.

The Education Welfare Officer will issue:

- **A Penalty Notice Warning Letter (PNWL)** if 8 or more sessions of unauthorised absence (6 weeks monitoring to improve)
- **An Automatic Penalty Notice Fine** if further unauthorised absence in that 6 week period
- **An Automatic Penalty Notice Fine** for unauthorised leave including holiday or any other term time absence
- **A Police Caution, followed by case work and Court** if no improvement over the course of a term

Children Missing in Education

The Academy must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. The Academy will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission. The Academy has a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.

Rewards for Good Attendance

We actively promote good attendance and hope that these positive encouragements will help your child remember the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Main School

Weekly Attendance Assembly

- School Attendance Bear given to one selected child that has achieved 100% in each class to go home for the weekend and be returned to school on Monday.
- Best Class Attendance certificate awarded along with the Class Attendance Bear which is kept in the winning class room for a week. The winning class to sit on the 'Winners Bench' during the next celebration assembly.
- Weekly scoreboard on the attendance board in the hall for children to see the Best Class Winners.
- Weekly graph of class attendance produced and displayed in foyer for parents to see.

Half Termly Attendance Assembly

- Most Improved Attendance certificate awarded to child whose attendance has improved the most that half term. Most Improved Bear to be taken home over the half term and returned to school first day back.
- certificate awarded to children achieving 100%

Termly Attendance Assembly

- Medals and Certificate for those that achieve 100% attendance
- Attendance Party for children achieving 100%
- Class Attendance Trophy and certificate for the class that has won the most times is to be kept in classroom over the next term and acknowledgment in newsletter

Yearly Attendance Assembly

- Engraved personalised trophy, certificate and a trip to the park for children who achieve 100% attendance for the academic year.

Nursery

Half Termly Rewards

- 100% attendance certificates to be given out and attendance balloon

Termly Rewards

- 100% attendance certificates to be given out and a medal

Yearly Rewards

- Engraved personalised trophy, certificate.

If you are experiencing any problems or have any queries regarding your child's attendance please contact:

**Mrs B Johnston: Attendance Officer
Miss M Jennings: Family Worker
The Ferrars Academy - 01582 573641**

**Education Welfare Service
Luton Borough Council - 01582 548174**