



Attendance Policy

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1 Aim and objectives

Rationale

This policy has been written to promote good attendance in school and to formalise the procedures if a child's attendance is causing concern.

Aims

At Inspire Multi Academy Trust, we aim that our children: -

- Are tolerant, sensitive and understanding, showing respect for the rights, views and property of others
- Develop a responsible and independent attitude towards their work and towards their role in society
- Achieve their full potential in terms of academic achievement, aesthetic appreciation and spiritual awareness

All members of the school community work towards the school aims by: -

- Valuing children as individuals and respecting their rights, values and beliefs
- Fostering and promoting good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community
- Providing a well-ordered environment in which all are aware of behavioural expectations and are supported to meet these expectations
- Offering equal opportunities in all aspects of school life and recognising the importance of different cultures
- Encouraging, praising and positively reinforcing good relationships, behaviour and attitudes
- Working as a team to encourage and support each other

As a school we aim for an attendance rate of 96%+ to help all children achieve their full potential as we recognise that this can only be achieved by maximising the number of sessions children attend school.

Objectives

- To ensure rigorous systems for recording attendance in school are maintained
- To formalise the analysis of attendance data to be used for action planning
- To formalise the rewards used to recognise good attendance
- Identify and clarify the role of parents in promoting good attendance.
- To set out triggers at which formal monitoring of attendance will be initiated

- To set out triggers and procedures to deal with non-attendance at school
- To ensure the welfare and safety of all children in school
- To ensure support is in place for children absent from education

Recording Attendance Data

Records of attendance are recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers are marked either with a pencil and then entered manually onto SIMS (New Penshaw and Fatfield), Sims (Burnside) or via a Registration file stored on the staff share which is then entered manually onto SIMS (Farringdon) and electronic email (Plains Farm) is used which is sent through to the school office electronically on completion.

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to count the number of children attending on a daily basis. Absences are recorded by either the office staff or class teacher depending on whom the parents contact. These records are to be retained by the school office. Records of children coming into school late are also kept in the school office.

Detailed records are kept for specific children who have poor attendance and/or punctuality by the Class Teacher and Attendance Lead. This provides evidence for non-attendance procedures.

On a weekly basis, usually a Monday the school office runs a report for all classes detailing individual children's attendance for the previous week.

Procedures for Parents and Carers

If a child is unfit for school, the parent or carer is required to contact the school on the first day of absence in person or by telephone. It is expected that parents or carers contact the school on each subsequent day of absence unless we are informed on the initial phone call that the absence will be of a specific length. This is our only way of knowing that a child has not gone missing since leaving home.

If there is no reason for the absence given, either verbally or by letter then contact will be made on the first day by the school office/Family Support worker (Farringdon). If by the second day we still haven't received any contact it is the class teacher's/Family Support worker's (Farringdon) responsibility to contact the parent. On the third day, if still no contact has been made, the class teacher must inform the Attendance Lead who will then contact the Attendance Officer.

Absence for reasons other than illness must be discussed with the school each time. Leave of absence may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments that are unavoidable in school time, providing a written explanation is received. If a child does not want to attend a school for any

reason, it is important that parents and carers do not collude with the child by stating sickness as a reason of absence. Parents and carers must discuss the problem with the school at the first opportunity. The school will assess the situation and if necessary seek the support of appropriate agencies to resolve any difficulties.

What constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences?

Authorised absences are those which the school agree are unavoidable, e.g. illness, family bereavement, visits, dates of religious observance etc and absence for which leave has been given, e.g. agreed holidays in exceptional circumstances, medical appointments etc.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school considers unreasonable, e.g. holidays taken in term time where there are no exceptional circumstances, truancy, excessive lateness, shopping, theatre visits, staying at home because brother/sister is ill etc. An absence is unauthorised until an acceptable written or verbal explanation is received. If no acceptable explanation is received in writing within one week of the absence, this absence will remain unauthorised.

It is for the school, not the parent or carer to decide whether the absence should be recorded as authorised or unauthorised on receipt of note. The submission of a note does not automatically register the absence as authorised. Where we have concerns over the amount of illness absence a child has, the parent or carer may be asked to provide medical evidence in order for the Head Teacher to authorise the absence. If this is the case, the parent or carer will be informed of this decision in writing.

Attendance Data

Attendance data in school is used to: -

- Reward children for good attendance
- Track children with poor patterns of attendance or punctuality, with the aim of improving attendance and where necessary inviting parents/carers to school for formalised discussions regarding their children's attendance
- Reported termly to the governing body and annually to the DFE for publication

Rewarding Good Attendance

Good attendance in our schools is rewarded in the following ways: -

Farringdon

- Weekly school assemblies where classes who meet their attendance target are celebrated for receiving their chosen reward.
- Termly assemblies where the class with the best termly attendance receives their own reward i.e. Pyjama party, cinema afternoon
- Certificates for children with 100% attendance for each term.
- Annual prize from the school for children with 100% attendance over the year.
- Prize draws for pupils with periods of 100% attendance

New Penshaw

- Half termly celebration assemblies, where pupils with 100% attendance will receive a certificate and 'dip box prize'
- Half termly assemblies, where the class with the highest attendance will receive a reward for their class – extra playtime and a new book for their class library
- Termly assemblies, where pupils with the highest termly attendance will receive an award
- Children receive certificates for 100% attendance each term
- Annual prizes from the school for children with 100% attendance over the year

Plains Farm

- Termly key stage assemblies where the children with 100% attendance receive an award.
- Termly key stage assemblies where the class with the best attendance receives extra privileges.
- Children receive rewards for 100% attendance each term
- Weekly attendance rewards for all children with 100% attendance or most improved and punctuality

Burnside

- Weekly class assembly where the children with 100% attendance for the previous week receive an award.
- Weekly class attendance displayed on whole school display. Class with the best attendance gets extra playtime and a trophy to keep in class for the week.
- Termly assemblies where the class/children with the best termly attendance receives an award.
- Children receive certificates for 100% attendance each term.
- Annual prize from the school for children with 100% attendance over the year.

Fatfield

- During weekly assemblies the class with the highest % attendance have 10 minutes extra playtime during a Friday afternoon and an attendance star is placed outside of their classroom.
- At the end of each term, children receive certificates for 100% attendance and are included in a prize draw.
- At the end of each academic year, children who have reached 100% attendance are awarded with a certificate and a trophy.
- All children will take home a termly attendance letter, which outlines their attendance and how many days/hours lost learning this equates to – it is also inclusive of the impact that child's attendance is likely to have on their learning.
- Termly assemblies, where pupils who have achieved the school target of 96% or above will receive a gold star, which they can then wear on their uniform (over the academic year, children are able to collect three of these stars in total).
- When children have achieved 96% or above, their photo and attendance will be celebrated on the whole-school attendance display.

Trust Termly Incentive

- Two children from each school across the Trust receive a hamper full of goodies for having 100% attendance
- Ten children (two from each school) get entered into a prize draw to win £100 worth of family fun vouchers (Nandos, cinema, bowling, Smith's toyshop)

Working with Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will be told of the importance of good attendance at all parent's meetings and regular reminders in newsletters. At these times they will be reminded to telephone school on the first day of any absence or if this is not possible by letter on a child's return.

Parents/carers will be told how failing to attend school on a regular basis will impact on a child's mental health. When this is the case, school will provide support for the family.

Parents/carers, who continue to persistently keep children at home, are on the attendance monitoring register or find getting children to school difficult will be offered the support of the Attendance Lead/Attendance Officer.

Parents/carers of children who have 96% or less attendance will receive a letter detailing school procedures if they continue to keep their children off school. Parents may also need to provide medical documentation as proof of illness.

Formal Monitoring

The following may trigger formal monitoring of attendance: -

- Attendance falling below 96% either in a given term or over an academic year
- A pattern of broken attendance e.g. frequently missing a particular day or lessons, that gives a pattern of 4 broken weeks in any 10
- Persistent lateness will be monitored closely by the school and formal procedures will commence where a child reaches 4 periods of lateness over a 2-week period

Parents, who persistently keep children at home will be invited into school for a meeting, in the first instance, with the Deputy Head Teacher/Attendance lead if attendance falls between 90%-93%. As an academy we will always look to support and advise parents and children.

In the event that persistent absence continues and attendance falls below 90%, parents will be invited in to meet with the Headteacher. A record of this meeting will be taken and the minutes will be kept on file. A target of 100% attendance for a period of 4 weeks will be set and closely monitored.

A decision to move into formal monitoring will be taken in association with the Attendance Lead and Attendance Officer. Parents will be informed by letter if their child moves into these procedures.

The law states that it is the responsibility of the parent or carer to ensure that a child attends school regularly and on time. We work closely with the Local Authority and utilise all its sanctions to address unacceptable levels of attendance.

Formal Non-Attendance Procedures

If after a period of formal monitoring and support, attendance does not improve, a decision will be made by the Attendance Lead/ Attendance Officer as part of their regular discussions to refer to the Local Authority Attendance Team.

Parents should be aware that non-attendance proceedings may lead to them being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for their child's non-attendance.

- A FPN warning letter may be sent to a parent if their child has 10 or more unauthorised absences during a 10 week period.
- A FPN may be issued to a parent if their child has further unauthorised absences during the 15 school days following the receipt of the final warning letter.

- A FPN will be issued if a pupil has unauthorised absence resulting from an unauthorised holiday in term time
- A FPN currently requires payment of £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days, and will result in prosecution for unauthorised absence if unpaid.
- A pupil who takes 10 days holiday during the academic year can only attain 94.7% attendance.
- A pupil who takes 10 days holiday in each academic year could lose the equivalent of 22 weeks (almost 6 months - about 2 terms) during their formal school career.

Non-Statutory School Age Attendance Procedures

- Children who are of a non-statutory school age (e.g. nursery children) will have their attendance monitored on a half termly basis.

Appointments

Appointments – GP, dentist etc. that have to be made during school time should be notified to the school in writing, in advance. Where possible appointment cards should be brought into school and handed to the school office. Whenever possible, appointments should be made outside of school hours. It is expected that wherever possible, the child attends school either side of the appointment time.

Special Occasions/Holidays in Term Time

The 2013 amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 makes clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays cannot be authorised. The Headteacher has the discretion; in exceptional circumstances to authorise short periods off school.

Applications for Leave of Absence where dates can be known ahead must be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested date. Consideration is given to each request before a decision is reached by the Headteacher; on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its individual circumstances.

Any leave of absence that has been declined or the parents has not sought approval for will be recorded as unauthorised. These cases will be referred to

the Local Authority and a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued to each parent for each student.

Change of School

It is important that if a parent/carer decided to send their child/children in their care to a different school that they inform the Academy as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if applicable

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not received this information, the matter will be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Team.

Children Missing from Education

Where children have been identified as being missing from education, the school will follow the procedures set out by the Local Authority and immediately inform the Attendance Team. If the child is subject to a Care or Protection Plan, Children's Social Work Services will be informed.

Elective Home Education

Where a parent/carer elects for the child/children in their care to be home schooled, the trust will follow the procedures set out by the Local Authority. The individual Academy will follow the EST checklist for parents considering to home educate and then make a referral to the Local Authority within 10 days. If the child is subject to a Care or Protection Plan, Children's Social Work Services will be informed.

Off Site Students

Some students are educated at other provisions during the school day. Arrangements are made with the provider to ensure that attendance is notified to the school office as early as possible within the session. Students who have temporary or permanent placements within Behaviour Units are registered daily at the unit and confirmation of their attendance is faxed or emailed to the school office at the end of the week. The units are asked to immediately contact parents and carers or use their attendance officers to chase up any absence from the first day.

Attendance Officer

An Attendance Officer will contact parents directly if there are concerns with their child's attendance.

Monitoring

This policy will be presented to governors for annual review and will form part of the children's pastoral care procedures, achievement records, inclusion and safeguarding policy.