

Friars Primary (Foundation) School



School Attendance Policy

Last reviewed: June 2015

Induction to Friars Primary School Attendance Policy

It is the legal requirement that all children attend school for 190 days and that we monitor attendance and punctuality.

We work with the Link Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to ensure that all pupils maintain good attendance and punctuality, and take the necessary steps and actions to achieve this.

We believe that child has a fundamental right to be educated. Regular attendance at school plays an important part in helping each pupil to develop her/his potential. We will ensure that all pupils attend to their fullest and that any problems which may obstruct this are recognised and acted upon as soon as possible.

We do all we can to encourage the children to attend school, and put in place the appropriate procedures. We expect all children on roll to attend everyday and on time, when school is in session, (as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so).

As a key task, the Governors and staff of Friars School place maximum importance to attendance rates. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and may lead to educational disadvantages. Individual's absences will therefore be cautiously investigated and unjustified absence will not be acceptable. The Head Teacher is very much involved and requests regular up-dates in relation to the school attendance. He has an open door policy for parents to discuss any concerns including attendance.

We are committed to promoting high levels of pupil achievement. Every pupil is assisted to achieve her or his true potential by the maximum possible attendance at school. The school relies on the commitment from the parents to enable their child to attend regularly and work in partnership with the school to achieve the best for their child.

The Aim of the School is to:

- Facilitate pupils to sustained good school attendance, by providing a full and efficient educational experience.
- Inform parents and carers of their roles to play in maintaining good attendance and time keeping.
- Follow closely the advice from the Local Authority.
- Make parents/carers aware of the requirements from the DfE.
- Work in co-operation with the Education Welfare Officer, from the Early Help Service, Southwark Children and Adults Services.

Education Welfare Officer Duties

The Education Welfare Officer has the statutory responsibility for monitoring the attendance of all pupils who attend schools within the London Borough of Southwark. All schools receive the support of an allocated officer.

The aim of the service is to identify personal and/or social issues that may affect the attendance, progress and well-being of children and young people. The service works alongside schools and a variety of agencies to support families to overcome such difficulties to ensure children and young people are able to access their education provision.

Education Welfare Officer Actions

This may include:

- Home visits
- Multi agency meetings
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Fast Track to Prosecution

The School's Responsibilities and Expectations

Pupils

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time
- Be prepared for the school day
- To inform a member of staff of any problems they are experiencing which may impinge on their ability to attend school regularly.

Parents/Carers

- Their child attends school
- Their child arrives at school punctually
- Their child is appropriately dressed and properly equipped for the day
- They contact school on their child's first day of absence, advising of the reasons for absence.

Class Teacher

- Promote and encourage good school attendance and punctuality
- Monitor pupils attendance
- Maintaining an accurate register
- If there are any concerns regarding a pupil's absence, alert the Attendance Officer and Head Teacher

Head teacher

- Authorise or unauthorise absence or holidays during school time. (Decisions are made based on acceptability of reasons for absence)
- To encourage parents/carers to visit the school to discuss attendance and strategies to improve attendance
- To establish the reasons for poor attendance, i.e. the general health of the pupil, home circumstances etc.
- Meet with parents to discuss areas of concern and where other support might be appropriate.
- Common Assessment Form (CAF) initiation.

Administration staff

- Ensure that all registers are taken every day at the start of each morning session and during each afternoon session and are marked by the class teacher
- Record late arrivals and early departures
- Make contact with parent where no explanation of an absence has been received on the first day of absence.
- Prepare attendance reports for the Head teacher and Education Welfare Officer.
- The Attendance Officer will prioritise the list of pupils to be referred to the Education Welfare Officer for casework to be carried out

Attendance, Absences and Lateness

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 9.15am 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. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer 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 doctor/ dentist/hospital is 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 your child is absent due to vomiting, they should not return to school for **the next 24 hours** after the last bout of sickness. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.
- For more than three days of absence the school require a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.
- Medical certificates are required for absence greater than five days. Unless the Education Welfare Officer instructs the school to request one sooner.

100-96%	Excellent – Well done! This will help all aspects of your child’s progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.
94-95%	Average – Strive to build on this. Work with parents to continue to promote full attendance to move to 96%+
85-93%	Poor – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. School contact parent directly to seek ways of working together to improve attendance
Below 85%	Unacceptable – Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child’s learning. Meetings between home and school to share strategies for improvement will be called. If improvement is not achieved a referral is made to the Attendance Service - Education Welfare Officer [EWO]

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 to learn alongside others

Lateness

The class register is taken at 09.00 am and at the start of the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code ‘L’). The register will close at 9.30am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code ‘U’) This national code counts as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents at open evenings and may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Frequent or regular lateness can provide grounds for prosecution or the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Request for Leave of Absence

- Parents must fill in the school's request for leave of absence form, which can be obtained from the main office.
- There is no longer an automatic right for parents to request up to 10 days for holidays for their children
- The Government is strongly urging that parents are to avoid taking family holidays during term time.
- **NO FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME WILL BE AUTHORISED**
- Term time absences will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances will be determined by the Head teacher, Governing Body and the Education Welfare Officer
- Children are entitled to leave of absence for religious observance in the family faith.

The following request for leave will automatically be unauthorised:

- Holidays in term time (unless circumstances are exceptional – this will be rare)
- Leave of absence requested at the start of an academic year – being absent for the first two weeks of an academic year can be detrimental to your child settling into their new class, meeting their teacher and making relationships.
- Leave of absence leading up to statutory assessments (e.g. phonics screening in Y1, KS1 assessments in Y2 and KS2 assessments in Y6) – this is a time where children are consolidating their learning in preparation for the end of key stage national tests

The registration system

The School uses manual paper registers and a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records.

Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

The following national codes are used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence

J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-time tabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

- Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.
- Entries in paper registers must be in ink.
- All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

The attendance registers are taken at the start of the first session of each school day, and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

Children Missing Education (CME) Team

School aged children residing in Southwark have the right to receive an appropriate education and the vast majority of children are doing so. However, there are a number of ways a child fails to access the school system and hence becomes missing from education. It is vital that all schools within Southwark are proactive in ensuring that as far as possible, children and young people are not lost to education and that when families inform schools of relocation, all relevant information in regard to destination, forwarding addresses, new schools etc. is sought. It is not acceptable to de-register a child with only minimal information on where the family are moving to.

Therefore, the Children Missing Education team will;

- co-ordinate, through multi-agency work, the identification, referral, tracking and engagement of children missing or at risk of missing education
- manage the co-ordination of the referral process
- work in partnership with key stakeholders to develop the already existing inter agency network so that all members are aware of the referral process for pupils who are missing or at risk of missing education
- manage a central database of all children missing or at risk of missing education in the borough and monitor the effectiveness of interventions and placements
- identify and allocate a lead professional in relation to Children Missing Education
- follow robust tracking and monitoring systems to confirm residency of children moving out of the borough
- raise awareness of the service and provide guidance/advice to all schools and lead professionals in the borough regarding children missing education

The Law

Education Act 1996

The legal requirement under the Education Act 1996, that your child attends school regularly and on time. The Education Authority can take legal action against you and if found guilty, could result in a fine of up to £2,500 per parent for each child and /or 3 months imprisonment. Parents who are prosecuted under this Section of the law commit a criminal offence and therefore would have a criminal record.

From the 1st June 2014 the London Borough of Southwark will be issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences. Please read the protocol below for further information:

PENALTY NOTICE PROTOCOL (APRIL 2014)

Legal Basis

- 1.1** Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003, which created a new section 444A Education Act 1996, empowers designated LA officers, Head Teachers (& Deputy and Assistant Head Teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 came into force on 1 September 2007. A PN can also be issued in relation to the offence of an excluded pupil being in a public place during school hours during the first 5 days of an exclusion. This protocol describes the circumstances and procedures under which Notices will be issued by the London Borough of Southwark.
- 1.2** A Penalty Notice imposes a financial penalty of up to £120 which, if paid, discharges liability for conviction for the offence to which the penalty relates (s444 (1) Education Act).
- 1.3.1** The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform with all requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Equality Act 2010. Each LA must draw up and consult on a code of conduct under which the issue of Penalty Notices will operate.

1.3.2 The LA has the prime responsibility for developing the Protocol within which all partners identified through the legislation will operate. Penalty Notices issued without, or outside the terms of a Local Code of Conduct are unlawful.

You are hereby given notice that if your child is not returned to school forthwith, you may be liable for a Penalty Notice.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, says:

“If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, her parent is guilty of an offence”.

If the reasons given for your child’s irregular school attendance are not satisfactory, then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for failure to comply with the Law.

This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £120 fine
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000**
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to **£2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.**

The Government expects:

Schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and, act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

Signed:

Headteacher

Chair of Governors

Date: _____

Review date: **June 2016**

