



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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1. Introduction

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. It draws on the guidance set out in 'Accessible School: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils', issued by the DFS in July 2002 and the Equality Act of 2010. This has been further developed through the Children and Families Act 2014.

2. Aims and Objectives

Farnborough Spencer Academy is committed to maximising educational opportunities and achievement for all pupils. For pupils to gain the best from their time at Farnborough, it is vital that they achieve excellent attendance and punctuality. We strive for 100% attendance for all pupils. Farnborough actively promotes good attendance and discourages unjustified absence. Farnborough recognises that promoting good attendance and punctuality prepares pupils for the disciplines of adult working life.

3. Guiding Principles of Farnborough Spencer Academy

It is the responsibility of everyone to improve attendance and punctuality.

- The Academy needs to ensure that all its pupils access "an appropriate education" which meets their needs and allows all to realise their potential.
- The Academy will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each pupil can engage in all opportunities offered.
- The Academy will work with pupils and their families to ensure every pupil attends regularly and punctually.
- The Academy will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- The Academy has an effective system of communication with parents/carers together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- The Academy will support all aspects of the Education Act 1996 and the Children's Act 2003: 'Every Child Matters' by implementing this policy in a consistent manner.
- The Academy will have regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.

What you can expect from Farnborough Spencer Academy:

- We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unsatisfactory absence.
- We will work closely with parents/carers where pupil's absence is cause for concern.
- We will support pupils to achieve good attendance and punctuality.
- We will support pupils returning to school after prolonged absence.

We are a supportive academy and always strive to work in partnership with parents and carers to secure high levels of school attendance for of our pupils. The Attendance Officer is available for informal meetings, including home visits, and will work with parents/carers to resolve issues. Where appropriate the Attendance Officer will arrange for further support to be put in place. This might involve one or more of the following:

- The pastoral year team (tutor or Head of Year)
- Other pastoral support in school (e.g. counsellor, social worker);
- External support (e.g., CAMHs, Targeted Family Support).

What Farnborough Spencer Academy expects from Pupils:

- To attend regularly and on time
- To be punctual to all lessons
- To ensure that they register for all timetabled lessons and inform the Attendance Office where appropriate if they are not able to be registered.

What Farnborough Spencer Academy expects from Parents/Carers:

- To ensure their child attends regularly, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- To ensure their child attends every day the Academy is open unless they are too ill to do so.
- To avoid keeping their child away from the Academy for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation (see below).
- To avoid arranging holidays during term time
- To immediately inform the Academy Attendance Office / Academy if their child is unable to attend (by 8.30am where possible), including the reason for absence and expected date of return. Parents should also confirm in writing on their child's return the reason for their absence. Only the Head of the Academy can decide whether to authorise the absence.
- If no indication of a return date has been given, parents/carers should contact the Academy on each day of absence

4. The Law

- Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the 'parent' is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient, full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special needs the child may have either at school or otherwise.
- Section 444(1) if a child of compulsory age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school; the parent is guilty of an offence and maybe liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale: A MAXIMUM FINE OF £1000
- Section 444(1A) If in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1) the parent knows that their child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to do so, they are guilty of an offence and maybe liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale: A MAXIMUM FINE OF £2500 or IMPRISONMENT FOR A TERM NOT EXCEEDING THREE MONTHS or both.
- Registers are legal documents; regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.
- All sanctions are used to improve attendance and punctuality and reduce absence.

5. Punctuality

- The gates will shut at **8.35am**. Any students arriving after this will be record as **'late'**.
- Students who arrive late will be automatic, same day, **30-minute (C2 late) detention** at 3.00pm.
- If a student already has a detention that day, the late detention will be added to the length of sanction already being served.
- Parents will be notified on the day of the detention.
- Repeated lateness will result in parents/carers being invited in to school for a meeting with the pupil's tutor/Year Leader in the first instance. Where there is no improvement to the pupil's punctuality then the pupil's parent may be asked to attend a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team or a member of the Attendance Team. Pupils may also be placed on punctuality report.
- When processing the total number of late marks, both the L and U late code are included.
- Code L = Pupil arriving to the Academy between 08:40-08.45. This is an authorised mark therefore not affecting a pupil's overall attendance.

6. Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the Academy has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the Academy can do this.

Parents/carers should contact the Academy Attendance Office (by telephone) on the morning of absence (preferably before 8.30am) giving a reason and an expected date of return. This should be followed up by a note on the child's return.

Absence may be authorised for such reasons as:

- illness – medical evidence may be requested before an absence is authorised
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments, appointment cards are required before the absence can be authorised
- exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement
- days of religious observance (see Appendix 2)
- study leave
- exclusion
- involvement in a public performance where a permit has been issued by the Local Authority.

Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as:

- looking after brothers/sisters/unwell parents/carers
- birthdays
- days out, e.g. Goose Fair
- shopping trips
- Family holidays where permission has not been granted (please note, family holidays during term time will not normally be approved).
- Special occasions, where the Academy does not agree that the absence should be granted.

Medical/dental and other appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, pupils should, where practically possible, come to school before the appointment, sign out and return to school after the appointment. Should the academy require evidence of a medical appointment, a medical evidence letter will be sent to parents/carers. Absence due to illness will only be authorised if the medical evidence has been received (i.e. appointment card, doctor's note or prescription). If medical appointments are attended at the start of the day, causing the pupil to arrive late to the academy, medical evidence (as above) must be provided or a late detention will be issued.

Following an explanation from parents/carers regarding a pupil's absence, the Academy will decide whether or not it accepts the explanation and authorise/unauthorise accordingly.

- Absence which hasn't been explained (in line with DfE guideline) will remain as unauthorised.
- Parents/carers should not take their children out of school for days out, to attend sporting events, etc.

7. How we respond to Absence/Lateness

If a pupil is absent at morning registration without contact from a parent/carer to explain the absence, the Academy will contact parents/carers. We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will always do our best to contact parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of their child's absence. Contact will be via automated message which will attempt to call/text landline numbers and mobile numbers for priority 1 and 2 contact numbers. Parents/carers should contact the Attendance to inform us of the reason for their child's absence. The academy asks that parents/carers ensure that the academy has the most up to contact details at all times.

The Attendance Team will work towards meeting the targets by carrying out the following tasks:

- To call the parent/carers of pupils on the first day of their absence for those pupils that are in LAC.
- To call all parents/carers of pupils on the first day of their absence who are Persistent Absentees (i.e.: pupils with 90% attendance or less).
- To text parents/carers whose child has been recorded as being absent but having not received any notification as to why, asking them to leave a message on the pupil absence line to advise the reason for the absence.
- To call all parents/carers of pupils on the first day of an absence when a parent/carer has not informed the Academy and has not responded to the text.
- A home visit to be made by the Attendance Officer on the first day of absence if no contact has been made with parents/carers.
- A home visit to be made by the Attendance Officer on the 2nd day of recurrent absences where contact cannot be made with the parent/carer.
- To arrange with the relevant Head of Year a work package to be provided for pupils who are unable to attend the Academy for 3 days or more.
- To meet with Heads of Year weekly/fortnightly basis to identify pupils at risk of becoming Persistent Absentee (see table below to identify trigger points for intervention).
- To ensure all pupil attendance records are updated on SIMS.

- To ensure parent/carers are given up to date information on their child's attendance.
- To record and keep an accurate record of all correspondence between all the relevant people contacted, dates, times and actions for use in legal proceedings.
- To action the request from the Principal for the issue of a Penalty Notice/Court action from the Local Authority for persistent unauthorised absence or unauthorised lateness.
- To refer families to family support interventions when needs are identified.
- To use the CAF process to support family issues on Pupil's poor attendance.

Where no sustained improvement in attendance/lateness is demonstrated despite intervention a referral will be made to Nottingham Education Welfare Service. Legal Action may be instigated which could result in a Penalty Notice being issued per parent/per child or the matter could be referred to the Magistrates Court.

7.1 Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any pupil whose attendance has reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention. Intervention may be via:

- An action plan to improve attendance will be created which may involve a CAF and referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant Academy staff and parents/carers.
- Where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the Academy, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed via the Education Welfare Service.

Persistent Absence data is communicated to the Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

| Persistent absence is defined as any pupil with absences below 90%: | PA = 90% | Date PA = 90% days per term |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Term dates | Sessions per term | |
| Term 1 – Sept to Oct | 7 sessions | 3.5 days absence |
| Term 2 – Nov to Dec | 14 sessions | 7 days absence |
| Term 3 – Jan to Feb | 20 sessions | 10 days absence |
| Term 4 – Feb to April | 25 sessions | 12.5 days absence |
| Term 5 – May to June | 31 sessions | 15.5 days absence |
| Term 6 – June to July | 38 sessions | 19 days absence |

Note that the session numbers are subject to change each September due to term dates. A session is half an Academy day.

7.2 Permission for exceptional leave

No leave of absence for any year group will be authorised except in exceptional circumstances.

Under the 2013 amendment, Principals may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional leave must be applied for in writing to the Principal and the decision to authorise leave of absence rests entirely with the Principal.

The request should be in writing to the Principal before the leave of absence is booked and taken.

When considering granting the leave of absence as exceptional circumstance the Principal will consider:

- The amount of time requested;
- Circumstances of the request;
- Distance and whether the trip is a rare event;
- Frequency of the request;
- Previous leave of absences taken within pupil's academy career;
- When the request was made;
- Proximity of external and internal examinations (including controlled assessments);
- The pupil's current attendance record, including previous academic years;
- The impact that absence will have on a pupil's attendance record;
- The impact on the pupil's education and their ability to catch up on the work that would be missed.

Should an absence coincide with examinations periods (both external & internal) permission will not be given.

Pupils taken out of the Academy for a family holiday during term time will have the absence recorded as an un-agreed family holiday (code G) on their attendance record. The Principal may request action from the Local Authority in the form of a penalty notice to be issued to the parent/carer. The penalty notice will be per parent/carer per child.

Any pupil who does not return by the agreed date will incur unauthorised absences until such time as they do return. This could result in the Principal requesting legal action from the Local Authority in the form of a penalty notice to be issued to the parents/carers.

If after 10 days of the expected return date, the pupil has still not returned to the Academy, and no contact with parents/carers has been made by the Academy, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service for further enquiries to be made. This will involve the Local Authority Missing Children's Team contacting and visiting the parents/carers. If the Local Authority is unable to locate the parents/carers/child/ren, the Academy will remove the child/ren from the Academy roll. Parents/carers are then required to reapply for a place at the Academy and there is no guarantee that a space will be available.

If parents/carers do not apply for the leave of absence in advance of taking it, the pupil will have the leave of absence recorded as un-agreed family holiday on their attendance record, and this could result in the Principal requesting legal action from the Local Authority.

7.3 Absences for Religious Observance

In accordance with guidelines from the DFE the Academy will authorise one day of absence for any Religious Observance on any one occasion, and only 3 days maximum in an academic year. Parents/carers will be advised in advance of the agreed dates. All other absences will be unauthorised.

7.4 Missing Children

If a child is absent for a longer period than 10 days, and the school has received no notification as to why, they will be referred to the Local Authority Missing Children's Team, this may result in the child/ren being taken off the school roll and placed on the National 'Missing Child Register'.

7.5 Travellers

Parents/Carers should inform school or The Traveller Education Team that the family will be travelling for the purposes of work, and intend to return at a given time. A place will be kept open and a record of absence authorised. Traveller families will be protected from prosecution for poor attendance where they can demonstrate that:

- They are engaged in a trade or business of such nature that requires them to travel from place to place;
- The pupil has attended school as a registered pupil as regularly as the trade permits;
- The pupil has attained the age of six years and they have attended at least 200 half-day sessions in the preceding 12 months.

Though there are specific regulations relating to the attendance at school of children from the Traveller Community, this should not be an excuse for not following the appropriate procedures where attendance is an issue, and the family are not known to be travelling for the purposes of work.

7.6 Penalty Notices

Reducing absence and improving punctuality are key priorities, both nationally and locally. Missing time in the Academy adversely affects a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts Academy routines and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

For these reasons, the powers given under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, 2003, have been adopted by Farnborough Spencer Academy. This gives an additional strategy to be used as a sanction when parents/carers do not fulfil their responsibility to ensure their child/ren attends the Academy regularly.

Section 23 of the Act gives powers to the Local Authority to issue penalty notices where parents/carers are considered capable but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child/ren's attendance at the Academy. These powers came into force on 27th February 2004.

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if their child/ren fails to attend the Academy regularly, and the absences are classed as unauthorised. Such cases may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act, 1996. A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court, whilst still securing an improvement in the pupil's attendance. If payment is made within 21 days of receipt of a notice the fine is £60 (per parent/carer per child), rising to £120 (per parent/carer per child) if paid before 28 days. If a penalty

notice is not paid the matter will be referred by the Local Authority to the magistrate's court and further fines and sanctions will be applied.

Penalty notices will be issued from the Local Authority by writing to the parents/carers at the pupil's home address (which is held on the Schools Information Management System (SIMS) record at the Academy).

The Principal will ask the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice in cases where a pupil is absent and the absences are unauthorised/un-agreed by the Academy. These circumstances may include:

- The pupil concerned must have at least 10% unauthorised absence within a 10 week period (Code O).
- Instances where parents/carers take their child/ren out of the Academy for family holidays in term time (code G); and have not shown reasonable attendance in the rolling 12 month period prior to the date of the request.
- Instances of excessive delayed return from holidays, without prior Academy approval;
- The pupil has accrued five unauthorised lates (code U) within a four-week period.
- A child seen in a public place within the first 5 days when excluded.

Parents/carers will receive a written warning of the possibility of a notice being issued, which will inform them the extent of their child/ren's absences and give them 15 Academy days to effect an improvement. There is no limit to the number of formal warnings, which can be issued. There is no statutory right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning, parents/carers can make representation should they wish to.

Parents/carers have up to 28 days from receipt of the penalty notice to pay in full. If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full before the expiry of the period for paying it, the Local Authority shall institute proceedings in accordance with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If proven, this can result in a fine of up to £1000 (per parent/carer per child) being issued, or a range of disposals such as parenting orders or community sentences, depending on the circumstances.

7.7 Re-integration following Long-term Absence

- Where a pupil has been absent for a prolonged period of time, perhaps due to illness, the Academy will:
- Welcome the pupil back to the Academy and value their return
- Provide support for the pupil in consultation with parents/carers to enable a successful return to the Academy.
- Ensure that all relevant staff are informed of the circumstances.
- Work with other agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a successful outcome.
- Consider a personalised programme of return if appropriate
- Nominate a key member of staff to monitor and review the pupil's return.

8. Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

- It is the belief that all pupils are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is engaging and personalised to meet their needs. The curriculum is monitored and revised on an annual basis so that it meets the ability needs of all pupils.
- Pupils are regularly informed of their attendance levels and, if appropriate, how they can improve.
- Where appropriate, pupils whose attendance falls below the appropriate target for each academy will be set a target for improvement and progress towards these targets will be regularly reviewed.
- Good and improved attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded.
- Pupils, parents/carers and staff are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the Academy Attendance Office at any time to discuss their child's attendance.
- Regular meetings will be held with the appropriate members of staff/external agencies to identify and support those pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Pupils who have been absent for extended periods of time will be supported as appropriate to re-integrate back into the Academy.
- Effective links are made with primary schools to facilitate the smooth transition to Farnborough Academy.

9. Staff Roles and Responsibilities:

All members of the Academy have a role to play in improving attendance and reducing absence.

Subject teachers

- Welcome and value the attendance of all pupils to lessons.
- Will ensure all pupils are accurately registered on SIMS within the first 3 minutes of your lessons.
- Will ensure that pupils know the register is being taken.
- Will identify pupil absence to lessons and take appropriate action.
- Inform the attendance office if a pupils is absent from their lesson when the have been marked present previously.

Tutors

- Will discuss absence and attendance weekly with pupils.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will work with identified pupils, setting targets to improve attendance and monitoring progress towards those targets.
- Will ensure that all absence notes or verbal messages are sent to the Attendance Office.
- Discuss attendance with parents/carers.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.

Heads of Year

- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly for their year group, by use of the weekly Cumulative Attendance report.
- Will discuss absence and attendance concerns with pupils and set targets for improvement.
- Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified.
- Will support pupils to improve their attendance.
- Will promote attendance through assemblies, competitions and rewards.
- will work with other members of staff to share information and support pupils and their parents/carers to improve attendance

Attendance Officer / Assistant Principal (Behaviour and Attendance)

- Will monitor registration on a daily basis.
- Will produce a weekly attendance report.
- Will receive calls and messages from parents/carers regarding pupil absence.
- Will contact parents/carers regarding pupil absence.
- Will issue the Cumulative Attendance report to staff on a weekly basis.
- Will identify absence trends or concerns and raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers and liaise with relevant members of staff.
- Will take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the Academy, including improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.
- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will liaise with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified and provide support to improve their child's attendance.
- Will support pupils to improve their attendance.
- Will work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual pupils.
- Will provide data to the Principal, Senior Leaders on a regular basis.

The Principal and Senior Leaders

- Will ensure that the Academy attendance policy is implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Will ensure the whole Academy ethos promotes excellence in attendance and punctuality.
- Report to the Governing Body matters relating to Attendance and Punctuality.
- Monitor the curriculum to develop ways of improving the provision of educational experience. Utilise attendance data to inform strategic planning

APPENDIX 1

| DfE CODES, | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|-------------------|--|--|
| / | Present (AM) | Present |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present |
| B | Off-site Approved Educational Activity | Counted as physically present |
| C | Leave of absence authorised by the school | Authorised absence |
| D | Dual Registered—at another educational establishment | Counted as physically present |
| E | Excluded(no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| F | Extended family holiday authorised by the school | Authorised absence |
| G | Family holiday (NOT authorised by the school or days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| H | Family holiday authorised by the school | Authorised absence |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments). | Authorised absence |
| J | Interview - Approved Education Activity | Counted as physically present |
| 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 | Counted as physically present |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| S | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| V | Educational visit or trip Approved Education Activity | Counted as physically present |
| W | Work experience | Approved Education Activity Counted as physically present |
| X | Non-compulsory school age absence | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | (Enforced Closure) Not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Pupil not yet on admission register | Not counted in possible attendances |
| # | Planned whole or partial school closure | Not counted in possible attendances |