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## FOUNTAINS EARTH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Attendance Policy

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 **Fountains Earth PRIMARY SCHOOL** is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

1.3 The policy has been drawn up based on current government and Local Authority guidance and Statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

#### 2. School's roles and responsibilities

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Fountains Earth CE Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

#### 2.2 Attendance Leader

The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Headteacher will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with staff and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that the Governing Body is fully aware of attendance data and targets. The HT will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to help with any difficulties.

#### 2.3 Registration

i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once after lunch. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers. The Business manager will complete the registers using the prescribed codes (see Appendix 1).

ii) The register will be called promptly at **9.00 am** and **1 pm** by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

iii) The registers will close at **9.30 am** and **1.30 pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will be marked as **late**.

## 2.4 Categorising absence

i) A mark will be made in respect of each child following the close of the registers. Any child who is not present will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.

ii) Fountains Earth CE Primary School recognizes the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognizes that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Fountains Earth CE Primary School will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.

iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;

iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) Where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,

- a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered.

.In **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance

(b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too unwell to attend;

(c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand;

(d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;

(e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;

(f) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;

(g) the pupil / student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;

(h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a limited period**.

v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil or parents are staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil or parents are shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

## 2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance before entering the appropriate code in the register.

## 2.6 Absences after close of class registers

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the classteacher and reported to the school office. The school office will advise the Headteacher.

## 2.7 Staff Training

The Headteacher will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receives sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

## **3. Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Headteacher will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary relating to the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analyzed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE (via the Local Authority and SIMS) within the stipulated time frame.

## **4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Fountains Earth CE Primary School, currently we are rated as 'outstanding' for attendance. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

4.2 Fountains Earth CE Primary School has procedures for unexplained absences within 24 hours. The Home School Link Worker will contact the families to find out why the child is absent and refer to the Headteacher.

## 4.3 First-day calling

Fountains Earth CE Primary School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day if a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the

absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

#### 4.4 Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

#### 4.5 Referral to the Education Social Work Service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Social Work Service.

#### 4.6 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked as late (a session being a morning or an afternoon). The school will seek to find reasons for the lateness. A pupil who is persistently late will be considered in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. The children arrive at school from 8.45 each morning, the bell rings at 8.55 and the staff lead the children into school. The register is completed by 9.00.

4.7 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**

4.8 For the same reason it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day inform the school office. The school office will record that the child has left the school site and will mark them back in when they return.

### **5. Holidays in Term Time**

5.1 Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

5.2 Fountains Earth CE Primary School will consider **every application individually**; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing using the appropriate form, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday. It is therefore strongly advised that you do not book your holiday until approval is given.

5.3 Fountains Earth CE Primary School will consider authorizing holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

5.4 Requests for holidays for the following reason will **not be authorised**:

- cheaper cost of holiday;

- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

5.5 Fountains Earth CE Primary School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence using the appropriate form giving the reasons for the decision.

5.6 Fountains Earth CE Primary School will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, ie SATS.

### **5.7 Legal Implications**

Where a pupil is taken out of school for the purpose of a holiday in term time without the prior permission of the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a request may be made to the Local Authority to issue you, the parents/carers of the pupil/s, with a £60 Penalty Notice per family per child. If the notice remains unpaid after 21 days the penalty increases to £120. If the notice is not paid after 28 days the Local Authority will commence legal proceedings under section 444(1) of the 1996 Education Act in the Magistrates Court.

## **6. Extended leave of absence**

6.1 In considering absence for extended trips overseas Fountains Earth CE Primary School will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved;
- where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

## **7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities**

7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Fountains Earth CE Primary School.

7.2 Fountains Earth CE Primary School expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

7.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- notify Fountains Earth CE Primary School on the first day of absence by telephone (01423755289), e-mail admin@fountains-earth.n-yorks.sch.uk or reporting to the school office.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives and Fountains Earth CE Primary School will endeavor to support parents to address their concerns.

## **8. Pupils' responsibilities**

8.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

8.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. Older pupils also have a responsibility for reporting to the school office if they arrive late.

## **9. Governors' responsibilities**

Section 175 (2)

9.1 The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.



## Attendance

### A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

#### **1. When does my child need to be in School?**

Your child should be at school by 8:55 a.m. doors are opened at 8:45 a.m. The register is taken at 9:00. Afternoon school starts at 1:00 p.m.

#### **2. What happens if my child is late?**

Registration finishes at 9.05 in the morning and 1.10 in the afternoon.

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office.

A series of unauthorised late marks may lead to referral to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer).

#### **3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. We will telephone you if your child has not arrived in school by 9:30 a.m. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

An accumulation of unauthorised absences could lead to a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

#### **4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?**

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment.

(Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)

- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Family holidays in exceptional circumstances (only when prior approval has been given)

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

#### **5 What is unacceptable?**

The school will not authorise absences other than those in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays, day trips, shopping or birthdays are not classed as exceptional.

### **7 Can we take family holidays during term-time?**

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays. Only in exceptional circumstances will permission be given. You need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time. You should complete an absence application form stating the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time. The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission.

### **8. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?**

The school recognizes that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family, particularly for minority ethnic families. Contact your child's class teacher as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SATs. You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the Headteacher then approves the visit, the school will set work for your child to complete while away.

As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

### **9 What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he / she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education. Your child will bring home/ school book each evening with homework and messages for you.

### **10. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?**

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.



Appendix 1  
REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances