

THE FRIARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Issue 2
Review: Annually

The Friary School

Principles

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good Reason: illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ***parents keeping children off school unnecessarily***
- ***truancy before or during the day***
- ***absences which have never been properly explained***
- ***children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.***

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the (Education Welfare Officer/Education Social Worker) from the Local Education Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Penalty Notices court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the (EWO) themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice.

Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Regular attendance is an important factor in achievement in class. If, however, your child is too ill to attend, please contact the school at the beginning of any period of absence. If absence is known in advance please inform the school by phone or use the school planner. Upon your child's return to school a written note [or using the school planner] should be sent to the Tutor, briefly giving the reason for the absence. The school will contact home if a child is absent without prior notification. The Education Welfare Officer may contact parents over attendance matters.

A family holiday during term time is not desirable yet if unavoidable parents must request a leave of absence form which should be completed in advance and returned to the School Office. Permission for such holidays can only be given by the Headteacher and is discretionary (maximum of 10 days). Parents should be aware that holidays in term time are recorded on pupil's records as absences. The EWO has access to these records.

Pupils must be in class by 8.50am and 1.45pm at the latest. Pupils late for school will have lates recorded by the duty gate team. Pupils who come into school after 9.00am and 1.45pm must report to the Main Office. All lates will be recorded and included in pupil records. Poor punctuality will result in a referral to the EWO.

It is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the annual County target. Half-termly attendance and punctuality trawls are made with parents and pupils contacted over any concerns. An Attendance Clinic runs every term. A Senior member of staff meets with the EWO on a weekly basis and minutes of such meetings are recorded.

Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded at termly and end of year prize-givings. Sixth Form EMA students are monitored for attendance on a daily basis. Information on Education Penalty Notices and Local Authority authorising holidays in term times is available from the school on request.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Assistant Headteacher (data)
Assistant Headteacher (Pupil Support)
Heads of Year
School Office Staff
Education Welfare Officer

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

