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[www.farringdonacademy.co.uk](http://www.farringdonacademy.co.uk)

07<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

### **School Attendance**

We are writing this special letter to you about attendance to provide you with a clear outline about absence procedures and the School and Local Authority responses to poor pupil attendance. Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. This letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

### **Types of Absence**

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

#### Unacceptable Reasons

- Shopping visits
- Care for family members
- Days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- Parents' work commitments or business trips
- Holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- Parental illness

### **Illness and First Day Call**

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us by telephone on the first day of absence before 9.00am. If you do not supply the school with this information we have a duty to contact you so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure. If school are unable to contact you a home visit may be carried out.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Appointment cards can be shown at the office, medical and dental appointments where evidence is seen count as authorised absences.

### **Emergency Occasions**

There are some occasions e.g. bereavements, family problems, etc where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs.

Continued overleaf





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## Lateness

Please try to ensure that your child arrives at school so that they are present for registration; this is done at 8.50 am each day. Meeting and exchanging news with friends before school is important for the children's social development. Lateness causes problems over lunch money/numbers, register marking and missed instructions.

## Holidays

It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time. Where parents wish to take their child(ren) out of school during term time for purposes of a holiday, they should complete the leave of absence form. The form has been reviewed and contains advice on the implications of taking your child on holiday so that parents can make an informed choice. These forms are available on the Website and from the school office.

Where authorisation is not granted then subsequent term time holiday absence will be reported as a matter of course to the Local Authority; we are under a duty to report this, this can result in a fixed penalty fine being issued. The fines are £60 per parent per child.

## What we are aiming for

Average attendance would be around 95% for the year, with outstanding attendance above 96%.

## What is considered as poor attendance

Anything under 90% is poor and if attendance dips below 85% we will have serious concerns. Below 85% is regarded as persistent absence by the DFE. In this school we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 95%.

Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness we will need to discuss this with parents in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support – for example by involving the School Health Service. In the first instance parents will be invited into school for a meeting to discuss these concerns.

Should a child's attendance not improve and their attendance remains low and there are invalid reasons (judged by the LAAT not the parent) for a pupil's frequent absence then parents could render themselves liable to be reported to the Local Authority and are then liable to a fine of £60 per parent per child, which will double if not paid within 21 days.

Of course, no one wants this to happen but we need to be very clear about the issue.

We hope that these notes will help you to have a clear understanding about the School's expectations in this matter. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and we would be very pleased to answer any questions you may have about our approach to maintaining and improving our attendance record.

Yours sincerely

*C. McDermott*

C. McDermott  
Headteacher

