

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy has been written with the advice contained in “School Attendance” September 2018 in mind.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Admissions Policy
- Missing Pupil Policy
- Safeguarding Child Protection Policy

Key Facts:

- Regular attendance is vitally important for successful academic achievement and well-being.
- The School will promote good attendance for all, in close liaison with parents and pupils.
- Parents have a duty to ensure regular and punctual school attendance.
- The School will communicate attendance rates to parents and work proactively with parents to improve attendance.
- The School will maintain separate attendance and admission registers in keeping with regulations and using DfE national codes.
- The School may refer persistent absentees to the local authority for support.

### Introduction

It is important that staff, parents and students are familiar with the Attendance Policy to ensure all children achieve their potential. Regular school attendance creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Missing learning time leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and it is well-known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the School, parents and the child.

### The legal framework

The Education Act 1996 specifies the legal responsibility of parents of statutory school age children to ensure they attend school. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs; either by regular school attendance or education otherwise such as home education.

The same law requires the school to have an admissions register and an attendance register, and to place all children on both registers. Failure to do so is an offence. Specific details are contained within the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006(c) and referred to as such within the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (England) 2014 (Part 3 s15).

Children missing education who are of compulsory school age are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) later in life. Pupils at risk of harm or neglect may miss education as a result. The School must take action under the School’s safeguarding duties under section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and Part 3 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (England) 2014 in respect of all students. As such, the School must investigate any unexplained absences and follow the local authority children’s social care referral procedures accordingly.

## **Parental responsibilities**

- encourage regular and punctual attendance, being fully aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that their daughter in their care arrives punctually, prepared for learning
- provide clear written reasons for any absence which ensures the School can code the absence properly and accurately
- contact the School every day of their daughter's absence as early as possible and preferably before the start of the School day
- avoid making arrangements to remove their daughter from school during term time
- respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the School to ascertain the reason for any absence, including any safeguarding matter

## **School Responsibilities**

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (attendance below 90%)
- ensure every student has high levels of attendance so she can access the education she is entitled to
- act early to address patterns of absence
- encourage parents to ensure their daughter attends all learning opportunities regularly and punctually
- keep accurate and efficient records of attendance and registration at school including attendance at all after school and before school activities

We achieve this in the following ways:

- mark all pupils not present by the designated time, taking account of absence notes
- follow up absence with a telephone call to the parent if a reason has not been provided
- monitor attendance and lateness and take appropriate action
- specifically monitor any persistent absence (individual attendance below 90%)
- use of the DfE national codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations, including preservation of the entries on both the admission and attendance register for a period of three years after it was made
- only the Head or a member of staff acting on her behalf can authorise absence, other than short-term absence eg medical appointments
- discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Head of Learning Support as appropriate to identify girls causing concern, including engaging children and parents regarding any unsatisfactory attendance.
- implementing any agreed improvement strategies such as referral to the Local Authority attendance services and/or children's social care in accordance with the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.
- provide parent with the timings of the School day and the calendar via the School website and any other usual method such as the School newsletter – Weekly F'Hill, in advance

## **Farnborough Hill's Attendance Registration Systems**

Pupils are officially registered twice a day by Form Tutor at 8.45 am and their class teacher 1.50/1.55 pm. An electronic system is employed (iSAMS).

Pupils are also registered by class teachers at the beginning of each lesson (this is not done electronically).

When pupils are not in school and the School has not been informed by letter, electronic absence forms, email or telephone call by 9.15 am the Absences Manager will contact parents by telephone between 9.15 am and 9.45 am.

- Pupils arriving late to school should report to the School Office to be registered.
- The School Office will use the information to produce a School Register. This will record those that were absent and also those pupils that were present using the categories below.
- A copy of the list of absentees is kept in the School Office.
- Letters/emails informing the School of expected future absences should be kept on file by the School Office for at least one school year.
- If pupils are present during registration, but are going out of school any time afterwards, they are still marked as present. Lists of pupils on trips and sporting fixtures are always kept in the School Office.
- Teaching staff should register pupils in lessons. If an unauthorised absence suspected the School Office should be alerted (see *Missing Pupil Policy*).
- Letters and emails explaining pupils' absences after the event should be sent to the School Office. The School Office will amend the register and keep correspondence on file for at least one school year.

### Registration categories

| Register Mark | Description   |
|---------------|---|
| /             | Present – am  |
| \             | Present – pm  |
| #             | School Closed to Pupils   |
| 6             | Sixth Form Study Period   |
| A             | Appointment (eg doctors/dentists)   |
| C             | Other Authorised Circumstances (eg School Nurse has sent pupil home or she has permission to leave etc) |
| E             | Excluded  |
| H             | Family Holiday (Agreed)   |
| I             | Interview   |
| L             | Late with a good reason   |
| M             | Medical Treatment (eg in hospital stay NOT for dentist/doctor/orthodontist appointments)                |
| O             | Absent  |
| P             | Parental Note Received  |
| R             | Religious Observance  |
| S             | Study Leave   |

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| T | Telephoned                            |
| U | Unauthorised Absence                  |
| V | Educational Visit or Trip             |
| W | Work Experience                       |
| Y | Enforced Closure                      |
| Z | Attending approved activity in school |

### **Additional information on absence**

Sixth Form – when granted permission for agreed free periods of time in the School week, may leave the School premises signing in and out in the School Office.

Authorised Absence – An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the School has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parents write a note or telephones the School to explain the absence. Only the School can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a pupil out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence – An absence classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of both the School and a parent.

### **Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities**

If no reason for absence (T) is first entered, and this is later corrected (ideally within two weeks) to the appropriate symbol, (only in this case overwriting is allowable). A 'T' must not be allowed to remain indefinitely. It is the responsibility of the School Office to update the register.

The School's attendance register is backed up electronically on a daily basis. The register is retained for six years after the end of the School year.

Farnborough Hill as an independent school is not required to return absence data to the DfE. However, Farnborough Hill, as part of its membership of ISC, takes part in its organisation's annual census.

Local authorities have a legal responsibility to identify children of compulsory school age who are not in education. Schools must notify their local authority when they remove or add a pupil's name to the Admissions Register at non-standard transitions.

Farnborough Hill will inform Hampshire County Council of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the Admissions Register where the following apply:

- New school named on a School Attendance Order OR School Attendance Order has been revoked OR suitable arrangements have been made for education other than at school
- Child will be registered at another school (and won't be dual registered at this school)
- Not attending and another school agrees that she should be removed from this school's register. (Child has not died or been Permanently Excluded)
- Parent has written to confirm education otherwise than in school (there is no School Attendance Order)

- Not attending and no longer residing within a reasonable distance from the School that would allow for daily attendance
- Child has not returned in 10 school days after leave of absence was allowed PROVIDED the School does not have reasonable grounds to believe the child is prevented from attending (illness or other reasonable cause) AND the School and the LA have failed to identify where the child is after making reasonable enquiries
- Unauthorised absence for 20 continuous school days PROVIDED the School does not have reasonable grounds to believe the child is prevented from attending (illness or other reasonable cause) AND the School and the LA have failed to identify where the child is after making reasonable enquiries
- Child is detained (by a court or order of recall by a court or the Secretary of State) for not less than 4 months PROVIDED the School does not have reasonable grounds to believe the child will return to the School at the end of the detention
- Child has died
- Child will no longer be of statutory school age before school meets again AND EITHER child or parent has indicated the child will no longer attend the School OR the child has not met academic entry requirements for the School's sixth form
- The child has ceased to be a pupil of this school
- The child has been Permanently Excluded from the School

The School will therefore inform the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of 20 school days or more.

Staff who have concerns about a pupil regularly missing school and who may be aware of individual triggers such as travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage must inform the DSL immediately. If a teacher believes that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, the teacher is required to report this to the police in line with their mandatory reporting requirements.

School Registers are checked regularly by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) for any concerns or patterns of non-attendance.

The Deputy Head (Pastoral) in conjunction with the Head of Learning Support and Head of Year will investigate any concerns.

This policy is reviewed and updated annually by the Head, Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Head of Learning Support.

The next review is due in September 2019.