

Chichester Schools



Working Together



Fishbourne Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy written in conjunction with Chichester Locality Group of Schools

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At Fishbourne Church of England Primary School we start with the WHY – our core belief drives all decision making. We think deeply about the HOW, using our core belief to guide decisions on a day to day basis. Finally we decide WHAT action brings our belief to life.

Our core belief is that:

***'There is only one you in this great big world...
...make it a better place'***

Fishbourne Church of England Primary School supports the locality Attendance Policy and adopts it as follows:

Rationale

Every child has a right to education and parents are legally responsible for making sure that their child/children, once enrolled at a school, attend/s regularly and punctually. (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). Regular attendance at school is the single most important factor in a child/children making appropriate progress and achieving success. Regular and punctual attendance means doing well academically, developing better relationships with other children and positive behaviour. It also sets up good habits for when young people enter into work and life.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more interesting
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

Fishbourne Church of England primary school provides a warm, welcoming and caring environment, within which everyone is valued and respected. All school staff work with parents to help their children attend school punctually every day.

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason (e.g. illness or educated off-site).

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable (e.g. absences that have not been properly explained) or children who arrive too late to receive a mark in the register. Absence from school for holidays, days out, etc. will be classified as unauthorised.

Daily Procedures

Gates to school open at 8.45am. Morning registration is at 8:55am.

If your child arrives after 8.55am, they will need to report to the school office to be signed in before going to the classroom; this will be marked as 'late' (L).

The office staff contact the parents/carers of any child who has an unexplained absence by 10:30am. Absences are treated as unauthorised unless or until the school agrees on a satisfactory explanation.

Attendance registers are also taken at the beginning of the afternoon session.

Types of absence

Illness

If your child is unfit for school, you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Keep in touch with the school daily throughout the period of absence unless another arrangement is made with you by the school

In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested, such as a doctor's note.

Appointments

Parents have a responsibility for ensuring that non-urgent medical and dental appointments are outside of the school day whenever possible. In exceptional cases, where this is not possible, parents have a responsibility for ensuring that only part, and not all, of the school day is missed. Parents should complete a request of absence from school form.

Holiday absence

The school will not authorise holiday in term time. Holiday absence will not be authorised for other purposes such as birthdays or family events. Other than in very exceptional / emergency circumstances, absences will be recorded as unauthorised. Any parent intending to take their child out of school should complete a request absence from school form.

Lateness

If your child arrives after 8.55am, they will need to report to the school office to be signed in before going to the classroom; this will be marked as 'late' (L).

Children who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other children. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence. Parents or carers of children who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved.

If lateness persists, parents or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10-week period, the school or West Sussex County Council will be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice in accordance with West Sussex County Council's Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools (See Section 6 of this policy for further detail).

Collection at the end of the school day

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and / or significantly late, the school is obliged to share concerns with other agencies.

Persistent Absentees

If your child misses 10% (which equates to three weeks or 30 sessions over the year) or more schooling, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education.

If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, will arrange for the Head of School to meet with parents.

Pupil Entitlement Team (PEI)

The school works in partnership with the Pupil Entitlement Team (PEI), and seeks their advice on issues and matters arising from pupil absence. The initial responsibility to monitor, investigate and improve individual poor attendance lies with the school. A referral to PEI will be considered if the child's absence is unauthorised for 10 consecutive sessions, 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a recorded 10 school week period, or more than 20 sessions over the academic year.

The attendance advice line (01403 229023) is available for both parents and schools.

The school must notify the local authority (on the number above) if a pupil is absent for ten or more consecutive school days without authorisation. Where this is necessary, the responsibility for any legal action rests with the local authority.

Communication with parents

Arbor is our online management system where we record attendance. All parents receive attendance data through Arbor. If concerns about attendance or punctuality arise, the school will contact the parents/carers to discuss these and agree how this will be taken forward. Every term parents will be sent a colour-coded letter linked to cumulative attendance for their child from the start of the academic year, or from when they were enrolled at the school. This will be as follows:

Red letter – attendance below 90%

Amber letter – attendance between 90 and 95.99%

Green letter – attendance above 96%

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Penalty Notices and other Legal Measures

Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

West Sussex County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when

1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance.
2. The child has 10 unauthorised sessions within a 10-school week period (1 session = am or pm, therefore 10 sessions is the equivalent of one week).
3. The child has 20 or more sessions of unauthorised absence across the academic year. This includes unauthorised late marks.

Where a child has unauthorised absence, the school must enforce West Sussex County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The *Code of conduct* is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions

are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from:

https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/6138/fpn_code_of_conduct.pdf

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/ carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued.

For each case of unauthorised absence, the school or West Sussex County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to one or more parents/carers for each child. NB: This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings, both with unauthorised absence for holiday, i.e. one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days, the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid West Sussex County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to West Sussex County Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay. **The school do not benefit financially from a fine.**

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit West Sussex County Council's website at:

https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/6967/fpn_leaflet_0216.pdf

In what exceptional circumstances will my child's absence be authorised?

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Head of School to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence.

It is, however, down to the Head of School's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Their current attendance will also be taken into consideration. If agreed, then any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Head of School's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Their current attendance will also be taken into

consideration. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Head of School and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away, the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.