



Fitzwaryn School

Attendance Guidance

Introduction

Fitzwaryn 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 and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: parents, carers, pupils and all school staff.

School's Roles and Responsibilities

All staff at Fitzwaryn School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all pupils are able to learn and feel valued members of the school community. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: at the start of the day and at the start of the afternoon session. Class teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown below).

Registers will be marked between **9.00 and 9.15** and **1.00 and 1.15** by the class teacher (dependant on the classes individual needs).

Registers will close at **9.30** and **1.30**.

Categorising Absence

A mark will be made in respect of each pupil during registration. Any pupil who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. 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.

School staff will amend the registers to indicate lateness if a pupil arrives after the register closes.

School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a pupil is clearly unwell, staff at Fitzwaryn School will challenge

parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.**

Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example
 - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion e.g. family wedding
 - in **exceptional** circumstances, where permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance
- where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend
- 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 (we do understand that some of our pupils at Fitzwaryn School have many medical appointments and these are unavoidable. For this reason we hold many clinics in school to help minimise absence and support parents and carers)
- where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs
- 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
- in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period.**

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/carer
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. 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/carer is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence

Approved Educational Activity

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

Collection and Analysis of Data

A member of the school's office staff will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Headteacher.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Pupil Attendance

- On a daily basis office staff will go through the registers between 9.30 am and 10.00 and any absences will be noted. If no explanation has been received, school will attempt to contact the parent/carer
- If the child returns to school with no explanation of the absence from their parent/carer, a letter will be sent to the parent/carer requesting this information
- If a pattern of concern re attendance is developing, the Headteacher will speak to the parent/carer about their child's pattern of absences
- If there is no significant improvement, the Headteacher will contact the parents/carers and invite them into school to discuss attendance

Parents' / Carers' Responsibilities

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 Fitzwaryn School.

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act says :-

"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence".

(NB Where the Education Act refers to "he", it also means "she")

Fitzwaryn 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

Parents/carers will also be expected to:

- notify school by telephone on the first day of absence and confirm in writing in the home/school book upon their child's return to school
- ensure their child arrives at school on time or is ready to be collected by transport on time
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents'/carers' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their child's work and activities
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's school life. Fitzwaryn School will endeavour to support parents/carers to address their concerns.

Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring positive outcomes for all children. These include:

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly
- regular attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy
- schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others