



Attendance Policy

Reviewed September 2021
Ratified by Trustees: October 2021
To Be Reviewed September 2022

Firwood staff have contributed to the development of this policy and have been consulted throughout the process.

Reference has been made to:

Department for Education National Statistics- "School Attendance 2016-2017"

Department for Education "School Attendance" November 2016

Department for Education "Advice on School Attendance" November 2012

Department for Children, Schools and Families "Guidance on the Attendance of Pupils with Special Educational Needs" 2009

At Firwood, we pride ourselves on high standards of pupil attendance and we expect that all students will attend school as long as they are fit and well enough to do so in line with the expectations of 380 half days (190 full days) for an academic year as specified in Department of Education Guidance 2012. In our attempts to maintain these standards we adhere to a set of rigorous guidelines (outlined below) which value, and rely on the relationship with parents and other professionals (transport, school nurse and Early Interventions etc).

A student's attendance at school is the responsibility of parents and carers and Firwood School works actively with parents to encourage a regular pattern of attendance is maintained to ensure:

- The promotion of young person's welfare and safeguarding
- Every student has access a high quality education to which they are entitled.
- Student's succeed whilst at school.

If a student is absent from school and no clear reason is provided either by parents and carers directly or via passenger escort :-

1. Initial reports to the office via bus registers / phone call from home. Information shared with class teams.
2. Absence left blank in register & recorded as 'N' on SIMS until reason for absence is established.
3. Office staff to make 1st day contact by telephone to parent/carer.
4. If valid reason for absence then office staff to authorise symbol in register.
5. Following 1st day contact, if no valid reason is given this will be recorded as unauthorised. Continuing efforts to contact parents/carers will be maintained.
6. If no response to contact by 10.30 am Head of School (or SLT) to be informed and, in the case of a CLA or child causing concern, SLT informed and phone call to social worker / parent.
7. 2nd day contact as above.
8. Two members of staff will undertake any home visits as appropriate.

9. If a student has frequent absence and parents have validated the absence, office staff and SLT will monitor closely the attendance/reasons for absence.
10. Concerns about frequent absence would be shared at SLT & Trustees at designated meetings using attendance data. Absences are recorded in the office in SIMs and the absence monitoring file.
11. If a student has an ongoing medical need, resulting in frequent absence, the school nursing team/community paediatrician will be contacted for guidance and advice. Regular contact with the parents/carers will be maintained.
12. A student who has been absent for more than 10 days after an authorised absence or 20 days of consecutive unauthorised absence will be supported in line with "Keeping Children safe in Education" policy and contact will be made with the Local Authority to establish (jointly) their whereabouts.

Attendance at Appointments

Due to the range of needs that our students have, attendance at medical appointments may be more frequent during the school day.

All appointments will be monitored by the office staff and recorded as M in the register.

If a student leaves the school premises to attend an appointment, parents/carers will complete the signing out screen.

If a student leaves school due to illness during the school day the signing out screen will also be completed and escorts informed by the class team.

Holidays in Term Time

Holidays in term time are discouraged as a general rule at Firwood. However, we do understand that family circumstances may mean that this is necessary.

In this case, the following procedure should be followed :-

- Leave of absence forms are available from school and should be completed by parents giving details regarding the planned absence. The exceptional circumstances will be considered by the Head of School.
- Form should be returned to school at least 2 weeks prior to the planned absence.
- The Head of School will consider the application and inform parents in writing whether the application has been approved.
- In the case of extended absence from school, a return date must be provided before the absence commences, address while away and other additional information.

Absence Monitoring

In accordance with DfE guidance (2012) we no longer set whole school attendance targets. However, individual attendance is measured using SIMS against the following:

| Absence Monitoring | |
|--|---|
| 95 %+ attendance | |
| 94 – 90% | Cause for concern - monitor Contact made with parents (letter/phone call) |
| Below 90 % (persistent absence) | Serious cause for concern Contact with parents to discuss strategies to support and raise level of attendance. Monitored half termly Reported termly |
| 80 % (20% persistent absence) | <i>Penalty Notice issued</i> LA informed |

The Senior Leadership Team will be informed termly of whole school attendance data (for all students), with reference to the above RAG rating system.

SLT and class teams will be liaise regularly with regards individual student's attendance causing concern.

Our policy is designed to be culturally appropriate and inclusive of all young people. We will aim to avoid any form of racism, sexism and stereotyping.

The emphasis is upon learning within the home, school and community. students will be given the opportunity to transfer knowledge, skills, attitudes and concepts that they have learnt to other situations. Some students are offered time learning in other settings, e.g. mainstream schools, museums, colleges. Social inclusion is encouraged wherever possible. Opportunities are created for the students to develop awareness of other cultures.

Firwood School values the input of parents and carers regards the partnership between home and school very highly. We consider the quality of this relationship as an integral part in supporting young people to reach their full potential.

Woodbridge Trust is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented