

Attendance Matters

Dear Parent/Carers

It has been heartening to see this week that all classes had attendance above 90%. However, this is still not where we want to be as a school.

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at school, and to establish positive life habits that are necessary for future success. As a school we are committed to reducing absence, increasing attendance and punctuality.

We expect every pupil to maintain at least 96% attendance and above. Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers have a **legal duty** to ensure that their children attend school regularly. If your child is persistently absent or late you could be referred to the Local Authority's Education Welfare team and may be at risk of a penalty notice.

All parents should promote good attendance and work in partnership with us to make this happen.

Attending school on a regular basis is the key to your child doing well at school and will set them up with good habits for later life and the working world. Firbeck Academy is an amazing school offering your child many exciting opportunities and experiences to develop and enhance their learning. Through regular attendance, your child can:

- Build friendships and develop social groups.
- Increase self-confidence and self-esteem
- Develop and improve life skills.
- Engage in essential learning and other school social events.
- Achieve to their full potential and fulfil their aspirations.
- Minimise the risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour and becoming victims or perpetrators of crime.

Can my child ever be absent?

When a pupil is absent from school, this will be classified as either '**authorised**' or '**unauthorised**'.

The Head Teacher will decide which absences are granted as authorised. Authorised absences are only permitted for valid reasons such as:

- Genuine illness.
- Medical or dental appointments, that cannot be arranged out of school hours.
- Religious observances.
- Close family bereavement.



Wherever possible, parents should always try to arrange medical and dental appointments during school holidays or after school hours. If your child has an appointment they **must** still attend school before or after the appointment, they should not miss the whole day. School will only authorise the session the appointment falls within.

What are unauthorised absences?

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider essential or reasonable. These include:

- Forgetting school term dates.
- Oversleeping.
- Absences which have not been explained.
- Family member being ill or having an appointment.
- Keeping your child/children off school unnecessarily or without explanation.
- Day trips or family outings, including holidays
- Problems with uniform/clothing.



If your child is absent form school because they are ill you must:

- Phone the school office on the first day of absence by **8.40am** to tell us why they are away.
- Provide medical evidence if you have been to the doctor/dentist/hospital.

If your child is absent and we do not know why we will contact you immediately and may come to visit you at home .

Next Steps

We are really keen to improve the attendance of our pupils and want to work with you in a positive way to do this.

Over the next few days we will be sending out letters to parents/carers of all pupils, whose attendance is currently below 95%. If we feel we need a meeting as their attendance is already classed as persistent absenteeism or in danger of this we will let you know. The focus for the meeting will be: 'how can we work together to improve your child's/children's attendance?'

Remember we should all work together to ensure every child has amazing attendance and does not miss out on fabulous experiences at Firbeck Academy.

Descriptor	Attendance (%)	Actual attendance	Days of absence	Learning Lessons Lost
Excellent	100%	190 days	0	0
	99%	189- 188 days	No more than 2	Up to 8
Good	98%	187-186 days	No more than 4	Up to 16
	97%	185-184 days	No more than 6	Up to 24
Some concern	96%	183- 182 days	No more than 8	Up to 32
Cause for concern	95%	181- 180 days	No more than 10	Up to 40
Unsatisfactory	94%	179- 178 days	No more than 12	Up to 48
	93%	177- 176 days	No more than 14	Up to 56
Serious cause for concern	92% and below	Insufficient	15+ Too many and is a cause for concern	Too many and will impact on current and future learning

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have concerns about your child's attendance or need support in getting your child to school.