

Furze Platt Senior School Attendance Policy

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to make the most of the education available to them. The link between attendance and attainment is absolutely clear. It is accepted that much learning does occur outside school but the development of knowledge and skills are severely interrupted by absence. This is true for the individual student and their classmates, for example by the disruption to group work. Furthermore, regular attendance is a feature of adult life, and thus is an important lesson for later life.

Routines for Absence

The school day starts at 8.45am. All students are expected to be present for registration and tutor period at this time.

Lateness – if students are late to school they must sign in. Students will be expected to provide a written explanation for lateness. A student who arrives more than thirty minutes after the morning register is taken will be recorded as absent for the whole morning session.

Illness – if students feel unwell or ill during the day, they should report to the sick bay. No students will be allowed home without the permission of their parents/carers.

Signing out – if students need to leave the school site for any reason during the day, they will need written permission from their parents, which must be shown to their tutor. Students must sign out before they leave the site.

Absence – the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) makes it very clear in law regarding absence. Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend the school at which they are registered. There are however, times of genuine absence.

If a student is unwell and unable to attend school, a message should be left on the school attendance line (01628 625308, option 4 or extension 235) before 9.30 am on the first day of absence.

It would be helpful to know (if possible) when they are expected to return to school. When students return to school, they should provide a written explanation for their absence (please note that 'unwell' or 'ill' etc are not acceptable reasons). Absences of more than 8 days may require a letter from your GP. If a student is absent for more than three days without explanation from their parents, the Education Welfare Service will be informed, and if necessary, will make a home visit.

We operate a procedure called 'First Day Calling'. This means that we will endeavour to make contact with parents if their child is absent and we have not been informed of this on the first day that they are absent. This is for two reasons; firstly to ascertain that there is a genuine reason for absence, and secondly, that parents are aware of their child's absence.

Medical, Dental and other Health Appointments – Ideally, these should be made outside the school day. However, we recognise that this is not always possible. Therefore, we would request that parents endeavour to make these appointments either during the lunch break (12.30-1.10) or after 2pm to minimise disruption to the school day. Students must provide a written note in order for them to be excused from school.

Other reasons for absence – The DCSF makes it very clear that it is the school that authorises absence, not parents. There are some reasons for absence that the school will never authorise, as these contravene parents' legal obligation to ensure their children are in full time education. Reasons such as shopping trips, birthdays, receiving deliveries at home are examples for which permission for absence would not be given under any circumstances.

Some reasons may be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. These include performance with musical groups, representative sports (representing clubs/teams other than the school's),

bereavement or other compassionate grounds. Families seeking discretionary permission for such authorised absence should write to the Headteacher in advance of the proposed absence giving details of the reasons for the request.

It is made clear by the DCSF that parents have no right to request a leave of absence for holidays during term time. However, in *exceptional* circumstances the Headteacher may consider a request, as long as it is made well in advance of the holiday. The Headteacher will consider the students' attendance record, their academic progress, stage of education and their age.

Useful Links

The DCSF provides clear guidance for parents on their legal responsibilities to ensure their children receive full time education. The link below has useful information on this, as well as guidance about other aspects of attendance.

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/YourChildsWelfareAtSchool/DG_4016117