



Featherstone Academy

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Dear Parents and Carers,

The Importance of Regular School Attendance.

Ensuring your child has access to a good education is very important to us. A key part of this is for all children and young people to regularly attend school, as this gives each learner the best chance to achieve their full potential.

It is important that your child starts their new school year with a good routine of attending school every day. Planning ahead and trying to ensure that your morning routines are organised is important for everyone.

There is the expectation that your child will **achieve 95% or more** for their school attendance. We aspire to this for all children so that we can maximise their learning opportunities.

It is the law to ensure your child has regular school attendance (once they are a registered pupil at a school). We are obliged to inform the Local Authority if we have concerns over your child's school attendance. For further information please see the school's [Attendance Policy](#).

What to do if your child is ill

Please telephone the school by 9.30am to explain the reason for your child's absence. If the school doesn't receive this information, the absence will be classified as unauthorised. Also on safety grounds, we need to be aware that you as a parent are aware that your child is not in school. Please only allow your child the necessary time off school for their illness – extra days off means a lot of missed learning! Also if your child looks like they are feeling better by lunch time, please bring them into school for the afternoon session!

Getting to school on time

Your child should be at school on time, ready for the register to be called at. If your child is late, they will be marked as late on the register. Lateness can be very disruptive for teachers and children. If a child is very late to school, after the registers have closed, this will count as an unauthorised absence.

What if my child doesn't want to go?

Some children are reluctant to attend school, or look to their parents to provide them with an excuse. Never give in to pressure to let a child stay off school, it may make things worse.

If you are experiencing problems, contact school as soon as possible. Don't wait until the situation escalates. Most problems can be resolved once the school is made aware of the situation.

If the problems are in school, letting your child stay away will only make things more stressful later. Schools can often offer practical ideas to help make things better, but they can't do anything if you don't talk to them and encourage your child to do the same.

Holiday Leave

In order to maximise children's learning opportunities we request all holidays are taken out of term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If a holiday is unauthorised by the school, the information has to be sent to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice, in accordance with the Staffordshire protocol. All requests for a holiday during term time must be put in writing in advance (forms are available at the school office and on the school website.)

Medical Absences

Children often need dental /optician appointments which are very important. We do ask however that *wherever possible* these appointments are made outside of school hours. If it is necessary for a medical appointment, during the day, we ask that appointments are made from 2pm onwards. If your child is missing school due to a medical appointment, please provide a copy of the letter or appointment card to the school reception.

PENALTY NOTICE INFORMATION

Please see the following statement from Staffordshire County Council regarding penalty Notices.

Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time

From January 2018 any period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. Your head teacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by your head teacher to the local authority.

Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are therefore encouraged where possible to ensure your child attends school on time. However, if your child is late you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

These changes have been agreed with local head teachers and have been implemented to help promote and support good attendance to school. Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the council's website www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education.

WHAT IS A PENALTY NOTICE?

The Local Authority will continue to take appropriate action for absences during term time when notified by the head teacher.

A fine of £60 per parent / carer (per child) if paid within 21 days from the date of issue. If this Penalty is not paid, the amount rises to £120. If after 28 days of the date of issue the £120 is not paid the Local Authority will prosecute you under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This will lead to a hearing in the Magistrates Court and may result in a fine of up to £1000.

We request that any applications for leave of absence (holiday) are required to be put in writing to the Head teacher, at least 2 weeks in advance.

The vast majority of children have an excellent record of school attendance, and we recognise the efforts of so many parents to ensure their children attend school regularly.

Regards,

Mr Adam Gatrad
Headteacher



Artsmark
Silver Award
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