Farnham Primary School

'Together we discover, believe & achieve.'

Dear Parents and Carers,

Why school attendance matters:
By law, children aged 5 to 16 must be in full-time education. This can be at school or through home education. If your child goes to school, you must:

- register them at a school
- make sure they attend every day
- make sure they arrive on time - 8:35am at Farnham Primary School

Regular attendance helps children:

- make friends and build confidence
- learn routines that prepare them for adult life
- achieve better results and improve future opportunities

Missing school can lead to:

- falling behind in lessons
- emotional or physical harm
- risk of exploitation or involvement in crime

Why 90% attendance isn't good enough
If your child attends school 90% of the time, they miss:

- half a day of school every week
- four weeks of school every year
- over a school career, this adds up to a full year of missed education

Even small absences can have a big impact on your child's learning and future.

What schools do
Schools take a register twice a day. If your child misses school without a valid reason, it's marked as **unauthorised absence.**

You must tell the school if your child is ill. If you don't, or if you don't provide medical evidence when asked, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

Arriving late can also be recorded as unauthorised if your child misses the register.

Authorised absences

These include:

- genuine illness
- medical or dental appointments
- death of a close relative
- religious observance

Unauthorised absences

These include:

- shopping trips
- birthday treats
- oversleeping
- looking after siblings
- parent or carer being unwell
- letting tradespeople into the house
- holidays during term time

Holidays in term time

You must not take your child out of school during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The headteacher decides whether to approve the request based on:

- the reason for the leave
- the impact on your child's education
- the number of days requested
- your child's attendance record

If you take your child out without permission, you may receive a penalty notice.

Penalty notices and fines

From August 2024:

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days
- £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days
- if unpaid, you may be taken to court

If you receive two penalty notices for the same child within three years, you will not be offered a third notice. Instead, you may be prosecuted.

Penalty notices are sent by post and must be paid in full online. You cannot pay in instalments or appeal the notice.

Legal action

You may be taken to court if:

- your child's attendance falls below 80%
- you don't pay a penalty notice

If convicted:

- you could be fined up to £1,000 for a first offence
- up to £2,500 or 3 months in prison for repeated offences
- a criminal record may be added to the Police National Computer and shared in DBS checks

Before taking legal action, the council will:

- invite you to a meeting or send a written questionnaire
- explain your legal rights
- ask you to be honest and open about the situation

Support is available.

If you're struggling, arrange a meeting with school to discuss possible solutions.

For more information, you can visit the Bradford Council website:

https://www.bradford.gov.uk/education-and-skills/school-support-services/attendance/

Yours sincerely,

Mrs S Keenan
Headteacher

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