



**FARNBOROUGH HILL**  
WHOLEHEARTEDLY

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY INCLUDING CHILDREN MISSING AND ABSENT FROM EDUCATION POLICY**

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- Education and Skills Act 2008;
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

This Policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE, 19 August 2024);
- [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#) (DfE, 19 August 2024);
- [Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance](#) (DfE, September 2023);
- [Guidance for parents on school attendance](#) (Office of the Children's Commissioner, September 2023);
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#) (DfE, February 2023);
- [Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#) (DfE, February 2023);
- ['Is my child too ill for school?' guidance](#) (NHS, April 2024);
- [Keeping children safe in education](#) (DfE, September 2024);
- [School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures](#) (DfE, May 2020);
- [Children missing education](#) (DfE, September 2016);
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) (DfE, August 2017);
- [Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff](#) (DfE, February 2024);
- [Mental health and behaviour in schools](#) (DfE, November 2018);
- [Remote education guidance](#) (DfE, updated February 2023).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Access Arrangements during External and School Examinations/Assessments and during the School Day
- Admissions Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Learning Support Policy
- Mental Health Policy
- Pandemic Policy
- Pupil Unaccounted for During the School Day Policy
- Rest Break/Rest Breaks During External and School Examinations/ Assessments and During the School Day
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

## Aims and Key Facts:

- High attendance is a central part of the School's vision, values, ethos and day to day life.
- The School will promote high attendance for all, in close liaison with parents and pupils.
- Regular attendance is vitally important for successful academic achievement and well-being. Government research shows that pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.
- In addition, for the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Children missing education can act as a vital warning sign for a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Parents have a legal duty to ensure regular and punctual school attendance. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
- The Deputy Head - Pastoral acts as the School's Senior Attendance Champion and liaises closely with the Attendance Lead in the School Office, the Headmistress, the Head of Learning Support and other pastoral staff in order to support attendance.
- The Named Governor for Attendance is Julie Micklethwaite.
- The School will communicate attendance rates to parents.
- Improving attendance is a shared priority at the School. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.
- The School recognises that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore will work proactively and collaboratively with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance, both in-school and external, by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place in order to improve attendance. Securing good attendance is not seen in isolation and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with the School's efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources. Efforts to improve attendance are a shared, concerted effort across teaching and non-teaching staff at the School, as well as the Senior Leadership Team, Governors and local partners.
- The School will maintain separate attendance and admission registers in keeping with regulations, using DfE national codes and certain additional school codes.
- The School will refer persistent absentees to the local authority for support, such as the Early Help Hub.
- Long-term absence will lead to the School recommending referring to the pupil's LEA Inclusion Services for assistance with access to education.
- During a pandemic, the School follows its *Pandemic Policy* on attendance and Annex 1 of that policy.

## Introduction

It is important that staff, parents and pupils are familiar with the *Attendance Policy* to ensure all children achieve their potential. Good school attendance is a learned behaviour. Regular school attendance creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Missing learning time leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and it is well-known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. Children going missing or regularly absent from school is also a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the School, parents and the child.

## The legal framework

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance statutory guidance (August 2024).

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The Education Act 1996 (updated in September 2016) specifies the legal responsibility of parents of statutory school age children to ensure they attend school. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient full-time education which is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by regular school attendance or education otherwise such as home education.

The same law requires the School to have an admissions register (pupils 'on roll') and an attendance register, and to place all children on both registers. Failure to do so is an offence. Specific details are contained within the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and referred to as such within the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (England) 2019.

Children missing education who are of compulsory school age are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) later in life. Pupils at risk of harm or neglect may miss education as a result. The School will take action under the School's safeguarding duties under section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and Part 3 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (England) 2019 and Children Missing Education Policy drawn from DfE Guidance 2024, in respect of all pupils. As such, the School must investigate any unexplained absences and follow the local authority children's social care referral procedures accordingly.

Whilst the School believes that every pupil has a right to a full-time education and therefore has high attendance expectations for all pupils, it also acknowledges and accounts for the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts. This policy will be applied fairly and consistently but in doing so the School will always consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It will therefore consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

## **Parental responsibilities**

- to ensure regular and punctual attendance (attendance is compulsory from 8.45 am – 4.00 pm although the School is open from 7.30 am – 6.00 pm), being fully aware of their legal responsibilities; these include ensuring there are no regular patterns of absence, for example frequent Monday morning absences.
- to ensure that their daughter in their care arrives punctually, prepared for learning
- to recognise that if a pupil is enrolled at school, they need to let the School know where the pupil is each day and for their whereabouts to be authorised
- to contact the School every day of their daughter's absence as early as possible and preferably before the start of the School day
- to provide clear written reasons for any absence, which ensures the School can code the absence properly and accurately, and provide medical evidence for these reasons if this is requested
- to avoid making arrangements to remove their daughter from school during term time
- to respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the School to ascertain the reason for any absence, including any safeguarding matter
- to request authorisation from the Headmistress if any absence is to occur during term time unavoidably, such as to attend a funeral
- to return their daughter to school on an agreed date after absence
- to ensure that no absence is unauthorised by the School, recognising that deliberate regular non-attendance or absence for a continuous period of ten days that is unauthorised by the School will be reported to the local authority's department for Children Missing from Education
- to understand that the School will inform the local authority if a pupil has been absent due to illness and who they have reasonable grounds to believe will miss fifteen days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. This is to help the School and local authority to agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with the

statutory guidance on arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

- pay for any charges that may be incurred if the School makes a referral to the LEA's Education Welfare Office to assist with attendance, and/or to pay for any charges incurred if the School employs any LEA agency to assist with education other than at school, such as Inclusion or Access to Education
- give a term's notice when their daughter will be removed from the School roll, in accordance with the Acceptance Terms and Conditions, and to inform the School about the new school their daughter will be attending, including the start date

### **The School and SLT Team's Responsibilities**

- to consistently promote good attendance and reduce absence, in particular persistent absence (attendance below 90%) and severe absence (attendance below 50%) as defined by the government.
- to ensure every pupil has high levels of attendance so they can access the education they are entitled to
- to encourage parents to ensure their daughter attends all learning opportunities regularly and punctually
- to keep accurate and efficient records of attendance and registration at school including attendance at all after school and before school activities
- to monitor attendance (by the School Office); this is analysed regularly by the SLT with the assistance of the Head of Learning Support, School Nurses and the School Counsellor, where relevant
- to act early to address patterns of absence
- to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- to build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- to be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support.
- to alert the School Office and Head of Year if discrepancies in attendance occur from that registered

### **The Governing Body's Responsibilities**

The Governing Body recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it through the school's ethos and across its policies. They may take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded.
- Identifying a member of the governing body/trustee to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Prioritising attendance in strategies, such as raising attainment, behaviour and combatting bullying, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent attendance support is provided for pupils who require it most by prioritising the staff and resources needed. This includes ensuring schools engage and work effectively with the local authority School Attendance Support Team and wider local partners and services.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker, any pupils under the Virtual School and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education in line with statutory reporting deadlines.

- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy, which is published and publicised regularly so that it is easily accessible to pupils, parents and staff.

## Managing Attendance

We achieve our attendance aims in the following ways:

- marking all pupils not present by the designated time, taking account of absence notes
- following up absence with a telephone call to the parent if a reason has not been provided
- ensuring that only the Headmistress or a member of staff acting on her behalf can authorise absence, other than short-term absence, for example medical appointments
- ensuring that no pupil may abstain from registration if on the School premises unless an alternative arrangement is made, which must be agreed with the Head of Year and SLT beforehand
- providing parents with the timings of the School day and the calendar via the School website and any other usual method such as the School newsletter - Weekly F'Hill - in advance
- monitoring attendance and lateness and taking appropriate action to improve attendance
- discussing with relevant staff such as pastoral teams, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Head of Learning Support as appropriate to identify girls causing concern, including engaging children and parents regarding any unsatisfactory attendance
- using the DfE national codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations, including preservation of the entries on both the admission and attendance register for a period of three years after it was made
- implementing an Attendance Lead (Administrators working in the School Office) to ensure that there is a clear pathway during five weeks of non-attendance occurring, to establish the cause, monitor reintegration and to have a stepped approach with involvement of relevant personnel involved in assisting a return to school
- specifically monitoring any persistent absence (individual attendance below 90%) and giving particular focus to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support from the School and across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. The School works together with external agencies to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an Education, Health and Care Plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school
- in communicating with parents about unsatisfactory attendance, discussing the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing; the School will also challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like
- implementing any agreed improvement strategies such as referral to the Local Authority attendance services and/or children's social care in accordance with the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* and procedures
- Having a Senior Attendance Champion (the Deputy Head - Pastoral, who is the School's designated senior leader with overall responsibility for attendance) who monitors and evaluates attendance expectations and processes, has oversight of data analysis (see below) and is responsible for communicating clear messages to pupils and parents about the importance of high attendance
- conducting thorough analysis of data (for example half-termly, termly, and full year) to identify any patterns and trends. This includes analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance. Attendance data is also regularly benchmarked (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify any areas of focus for improvement.
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, or pupils in a year group with higher than average absence.
- Where relevant, working with local communities (including voluntary and community groups) to help remove the barriers to attendance that families experience. In some cases, families will experience the same or similar barriers to attendance for multiple children who attend different schools in the

area and in these cases the School will work together with other educational settings when appropriate.

- working jointly and sharing data on individual cases where it is of benefit to the pupil (for example health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms).
- monitoring in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings should then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.

### **Significant Levels of Absence – Persistent and Severe Absence**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Absence at this level could cause considerable damage to a child's educational outcomes.

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' (SA) when their attendance drops to 50% and below for any reason. Absence at this level will be causing considerable damage to a child's educational outcomes.

If a pupil has a significant level of absence (see the 'Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities' section below), then the School has a clear system in place to monitor and work to achieve a full return to school through a planned reintegration programme, which is discussed and agreed between the Head of Year, parents and pupil in a face-to-face meeting where possible. (If appropriate, the Deputy Head - Pastoral, Head of Learning Support and/or School Nurse will also be involved at this point.) It is important at this stage that the School supports the pupil and her parents by working together to identify any in-school barriers to attendance and that any barriers that are outside of the School's control are also identified. On their return pupils will be provided with support to build confidence and bridge gaps. These planned actions should be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

However, if for any reason the agreed plan has not been able to be followed, or if the matter is complex, then the School escalates this matter to the Head of Learning Support and the Headmistress. Actions that may be taken include:

- Where a reduced timetable may be agreed, this is for a finite period leading to reintegration and must be agreed by the Headmistress that it is in the best interests of the pupil. Evidence must be provided by a specialist in either health or psychiatry that a reduced curriculum or timetable is recommended, and for how long this should be. It is the case that all pupils are expected to receive full time education up until the end of the Upper Sixth. Any reduction of attendance is very rare and with a substantial medical or psychiatric recommendation. A diagnosis of a special educational need is not grounds for a reduction in attendance at school nor exemption from registration. The School adjusts its teaching to accommodate SEN diagnoses.
- If, following an agreed reintegration timetable, a pupil still does not attend school, the school will apply to the LEA for assistance in inclusion education, and may also refer the case to local agencies to seek help locally for the family, such as MASH.
- In cases where a pupil lives outside of the Hampshire local authority area (for example in Surrey or Berkshire), the overarching principle is that both the local authority in whose area the pupil attends school (the 'School LA' - Hampshire) and the local authority in whose area the pupil lives (the 'Home LA') work together to support the pupil and family. This feeds into each local authority's responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. More details can be found in the section on 'Working with cross-border pupils' in the government's statutory *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*.
- If there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance) support will be intensified through statutory children's social care involvement.
- If a pupil's absence requires support from an outside agency which is not provided quickly (e.g. subject to a waiting list) the School and/or local authorities will consider other avenues of support or other temporary solutions whilst waiting.
- In all cases, the School will monitor the impact of any interventions and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family.
- Where interventions are failing, the School will work hard to ensure that all parties work together to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach. In very few cases will all options

have been exhausted and therefore government guidance expects partners to work together to continue offering new approaches. If a particular form of support is refused or does not work initially, the School and its partners will work to provide further opportunities to engage in that support or try alternative solutions.

- It is important that the School continues to have sight of a child on its educational roll. If absence has been for more than fifteen continuous days, or there is another appropriate reason, then a home visit will be requested so that a welfare check can be carried out. An exception may be made if the pupil's whereabouts is verified by another agency, such as a hospital. Where possible, parents and the pupil will be seen, both together and also separately.
- The Headmistress reserves the right to determine if, in the pupil's best interests, transfer to the next academic year is not suitable. This will depend on the number of absences that may have occurred during an academic school year. Where the percentage of absence is very high, this may lead to the Headmistress recommending that the school year be repeated.
- If absences from school are high enough that the objectives of GCSE or A level curriculum specifications have not been covered to meet the JCQ regulations, the Headmistress reserves the right to determine that a pupil cannot be entered for that qualification. There may also be a recommendation, in the pupil's best interests, to take fewer qualifications in a particular academic year.
- In exceptional circumstances where support is not successful, not engaged with or in some cases, not appropriate, legal advice may be sought by the School.
- Where a parent has expressed their intention to remove a child from the School with a view to educating at home, the School will work with the Local Authority and other key professionals to co-ordinate a meeting with the parent(s) where possible. Ideally, this will take place before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parent(s) has considered what is in the best interests of the child. This is particularly important where a child has special educational needs or a disability, and/or has a social worker, and/or is otherwise vulnerable. Where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) the School will check that the Local Authority reviews the plan, working closely with parents and carers.
- Legal interventions are not used by the School at this time.

## **Farnborough Hill's Attendance Registration Systems**

Pupils are officially registered twice a day by their Form Tutor at 8.45 am and their class teacher at 2.05 pm. An electronic system is employed (iSAMS). Registers close at 8.55 am and 2.15 pm. After this time pupils will be recorded as absent.

Pupils are also registered electronically on iSAMS by class teachers at the beginning of each lesson.

When pupils are not in school and the School has not been informed by electronic absence forms, letter, email or telephone call by 9.15 am, the School Office will contact parents by telephone between 9.15 am and 9.45 am. Where reasonably possible, the School holds at least two emergency contact numbers for each pupil. This gives the School additional options to make contact with a responsible adult if a pupil is absent without the School being made aware.

- Pupils arriving late to school should report to the School Office to be registered.
- The School Office will use registration and absence information to produce a School Register. This will record those that were present and also those that were absent using the DfE categories below.
- A copy of the list of absentees is kept in the School Office.
- Electronic absence forms, letters and emails informing the School of expected future absences are kept on file by the School Office for at least one school year. Any electronic absence forms, letters and emails explaining pupils' absences after the event should be sent to the School Office. The School Office will amend the register and again keep the correspondence on file for at least one school year.
- If pupils are present during registration, but are going out of school any time afterwards, they are still marked as present. Lists of pupils on trips and sporting fixtures are always kept in the School Office.
- Teaching staff should register pupils electronically in lessons. If an unauthorised absence is suspected the School Office should be alerted (see *Pupil Unaccounted for During the School Day Policy*).

## Registration categories

Code	Reason	Classed by DfE	DfE Stats Classification
B	Off-Site Educational Activity	Attending a place other than the school	Attending an approved educational activity
C	Leave of Absence Granted by the School	Absent – Leave of absence	Authorised absence
C1	Regulated Performance	Absent – Leave of absence	Authorised absence
C2	Temporary Reduced Timetable	Absent – Leave of absence	Authorised absence
D	Dual Registered at Another School	Absent – Leave of absence	Not a possible attendance
E	Excluded But No Alternative Provision Made	Absent – Other authorised reasons	Authorised Absence
G	Holiday Not Granted or In Excess	Absent – Unauthorised Absence	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness	Absent – Other authorised reasons	Authorised Absence
J1	Employment/Educational Interview	Absent – Leave of absence	Authorised absence
K	Educational Provision Arranged by LA	Attending a place other than the school	Attending an approved educational activity
M	Medical or Dental Appointment	Absent – Leave of absence	Authorised absence
N	Reason For Absence Not Yet Provided	Absent – Unauthorised Absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent Without Authorisation	Absent – Unauthorised Absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Participating in a Supervised Sporting Activity	Attending a place other than the school	Attending an approved educational activity
Q	Lack of Access Arrangements by LA	Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance
R	Religious Observance	Absent – Other authorised reasons	Authorised absence
S	Study Leave	Absent – Leave of absence	Authorised absence
T	Traveller Absence	Absent – Other authorised reasons	Authorised absence
U	Arrived In School After Registration Closed	Absent – Unauthorised Absence	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational Visit or Trip	Attending a place other than the school	Attending an approved educational activity
W	Work Experience	Attending a place other than the school	Attending an approved educational activity
X	Non-Compulsory School Age	Absent – Leave of absence	Not a possible attendance
Y1	Normal Transport Unavailable	Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance



Y2	Widespread Travel Disruption	Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance
Y3	Part of School Out of Use	Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Session Cancelled - School Closed	Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance
Y5	Subject to Sentence of Detention	Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Infection or Disease	Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Other Unavoidable Cause	Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance
Z	Prospective Pupil Not on Admission Register	Administrative code	Administrative code
#	Planned Whole or Partial School Closure	Administrative code	Administrative code

### **Additional information on absence**

Sixth Form – When granted permission for agreed free periods of time in the School week, sixth formers may leave the School premises, signing out and back electronically using their ID lanyards.

Authorised Absence – An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the School has received notification from a parent or guardian, for example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parents complete an electronic absence form, telephone or write a note to the School to explain the absence. Only the School can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a pupil out of school to go shopping or to a music concert during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence – An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of both the School and a parent.

### **Online Learning**

In the event of a school buildings closure, learning will take place online using Microsoft Teams for communications and OneNote/Firefly as the primary means of sharing resources and work between pupils and staff. Blended/online learning is not available at other times.

### **Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities**

If no reason for absence is first entered, this is later corrected (ideally within two weeks) to the appropriate symbol, (only in this case is overwriting allowable). It is the responsibility of the School Office to update the register.

The School's attendance register is backed up electronically on a daily basis. The register is retained for six years after the end of the School year.

Farnborough Hill, as an independent school, is not normally required to return absence data to the DfE. However, the School is a member of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and takes part in its annual census.

Local authorities have a legal responsibility to identify children of compulsory school age who are not in education. Schools must notify their local authority when they remove or add a pupil's name to the Admissions Register (school roll) at non-standard transitions. Farnborough Hill will inform Hampshire County Council of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the Admissions Register where the following apply:

- The new school is named on a School Attendance Order OR a School Attendance Order has been revoked OR suitable arrangements have been made for education other than at school.
- A child will be registered at another school (and will not be dual registered at Farnborough Hill).
- A child is not attending and another school agrees that she should be removed from this school's register (the child has not died or been Permanently Excluded.)
- A parent has written to confirm education otherwise than in school (there is no School Attendance Order).
- A child is not attending and no longer residing within a reasonable distance from the School that would allow for daily attendance.
- A child has not returned in ten school days after leave of absence was allowed PROVIDED the School does not have reasonable grounds to believe the child is prevented from attending (illness or other reasonable cause) AND the School and the local authority have failed to identify where the child is after making reasonable enquiries.
- After an unauthorised absence for twenty continuous school days PROVIDED the School does not have reasonable grounds to believe the child is prevented from attending (illness or other reasonable cause) AND the School and the LA have failed to identify where the child is after making reasonable enquiries.
- A child is detained (by a court or order of recall by a court or the Secretary of State) for not less than four months, PROVIDED the School does not have reasonable grounds to believe the child will return to the School at the end of the detention.
- A child has died.
- A child will no longer be of statutory school age before school meets again AND EITHER the child or parent has indicated the child will no longer attend the School OR the child has not met academic entry requirements for the School's Sixth Form.
- A child has ceased to be a pupil of the School.
- A child has been permanently excluded from the School.
- The school will inform Hampshire County Council when any child's name is added to the admissions register at a non-standard transition point.

In addition, as detailed in previous sections, the School will inform the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who:

- fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded as unauthorised (attendance returns).
- have been recorded as being ill and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness (sickness returns). Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year. This is to help the school and local authority to agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with the statutory guidance on arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.

In nearly all cases, the Hampshire Inclusion Service (responsible for attendance, Children Missing in Education (CME), Elective Home Education (EHE), Exclusion from School and Reduced Hours Provision (RHP) is the external agency with whom the school will liaise.

Staff who have concerns about a pupil regularly missing school and who may be aware of individual triggers such as travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage must inform the DSL immediately. If a teacher believes that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, the teacher is required to report this to the police in line with their mandatory reporting requirements.

School registers are checked regularly by the Deputy Head - Pastoral for any concerns or patterns of non-attendance. Any falsification as to an absence of a pupil will be reported to the authorities by the School.

The Deputy Head - Pastoral in conjunction with the Head of Learning Support and Head of Year will investigate any concerns.

The School operates a stepped approach of liaising with parents when attendance is low. A letter asking for more details may suffice when a return to school date is agreed, and more involvement with the pastoral team or SLT, together with the Head of Learning Support and/or the School Nurses may be implemented. The goal always is to aim for full attendance at school.

When a pupil is absent because of medical (physical or psychological) reasons, there may be a consultant's diagnosis to verify this, preferably also with recommendations for the School about the amount of attendance possible, or not, and whether work should or should not be undertaken. It is not sufficient to give such reasons of possible absence as, for example, 'anxiety', 'depression' or 'eating disorder', without a diagnosis. The School may ask for the LEA Inclusion Services to be engaged if there is to be a long absence. There may be a fee for this additional service if the pupil remains on roll.

The School asks for liaison with external therapists and consultants – whether those arranged via the NHS or who have been privately engaged by parents.

No pupil enrolled at the School may also be enrolled at another school without the knowledge and agreement of Farnborough Hill. In such a case, as when a pupil may be in hospital for a residential clinic to assist them, there would be an agreement with the other school and an agreed dual attendance would be maintained by both schools. Enrolling a pupil at Farnborough Hill and not informing another school where a child may have attended is strictly forbidden. At all times, the registration must reflect the school at which a child has enrolled and is officially attending. The School reserves the right to contact the Head of another school if it is found that two registrations have taken place, and to pursue the matter legally if necessary.

The School aims to reintegrate pupils who have had extended absence, and any phased return is to be arranged with the Heads of Pastoral, Academic and Learning Support in conjunction with the School Nurses team. Reasonable adjustments and individual healthcare plans will be put in place where appropriate. Any plans for a phased return must be validated, as a recommendation, in writing at consultant-level, before the School will confirm the date of the phased return, in order to ensure the pupil is fit and well to do so. The School Nurses, or Deputy Head – Pastoral, may ask for updates on a pupil's medical or psychological condition on return to school.

A phased return to school is not expected to take place over more than a week, unless a consultant recommends a longer strategy. It should always have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the School will keep them informed and involved in the phased return process. If the pupil has an Education Health and Care Plan, the school will discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the School has agreed to a pupil being absent for part of the week or day and will therefore record the absence accordingly (normally using code C2).

If, following a phased return, a pupil is unable to return to school, then consideration must be made about involvement with Inclusion Services at the LEA if they are not already engaged.

Long-term absences may also be recommended for referral to the Early Help Hub.

When a pupil is ill and absent, it is expected that school work will not be provided, unless this has been agreed by the Headmistress in exceptional cases. In some cases, such as with anorexia nervosa, it can be

detrimental to the pupil to engage in school work since their focus needs to be on recovery and school work is often a distraction. The School Inclusion Services would advise as to the work that can be carried out. The School will work with the Inclusion Services if a pupil remains on roll, even though unable to attend school. This may mean that a pupil is dual registered.

Dual registration also occurs if a pupil is registered at Farnborough Hill but is being educated at hospital or a specialist clinic with an educational team attached.

On return to school following absence, the Deputy Head - Academic and Head of Learning Support will plan with parents the programme that can be followed and managed by the pupil, depending on the work that has been missed. The Deputy Head - Pastoral, Head of Year and School Nurses will also be involved. The Headmistress may also be involved in this decision-making if the programme of study needs to be more radical than reducing the number of subjects to be taken in school examinations, such as re-sitting an academic year if one has been largely missed.

If a pupil is de-registered but parents still require the services of the Inclusion Team at their LEA, they would need to take advice about options available from their LEA with regard to ensuring their daughter is registered with the authority.

If a pupil has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), school staff will:

- communicate with the local authority where a pupil's attendance falls or they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- where possible agree adjustments to the School's policies and practices that are consistent with the special educational provision set out in the EHCP in collaboration with parents.
- where needed work with the local authority to review and amend the EHCP to incorporate additional or different attendance support identified.

This policy is reviewed and updated annually by the Headmistress and Deputy Head – Pastoral.

The next review is due in September 2025.

## **Annex I: Attendance matters during a pandemic**

### **Attendance Expectations**

During any pandemic, the School will follow government guidance related to attendance, including all updates as they are published. It will be the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child attends regularly (this applies to both physical attendance and also online attendance, as directed and advised by government guidance). The School will record this attendance, and follow up any absence, according to its procedures. The School will also complete an online daily or weekly educational setting status return when required by the DfE.

### **Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating**

In some cases, the School may be advised by the government to close its buildings and move to online teaching, with pupils learning from home. When this guidance is relaxed or ceases altogether, the School will again follow government guidance on the return of pupils to school. A very small number of pupils may still be unable to attend face-to-face school in line with public health advice for a number of reasons, such as being advised to shield or because they have contracted the pandemic illness and are required to stay at home and avoid contact with others (self-isolate). The School will follow government guidance and on self-isolation. If a pupil is advised to shield by a consultant or clinician and not return to school after online teaching then the School will ask for written confirmation of this to be provided.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, the School will offer them access to online education and will monitor their engagement with this activity.

### **Pupils and families who are anxious about a return to school**

All other pupils must attend school. The School will bear in mind the potential concerns of pupils, parents and households who may have been reluctant or anxious about returning and continuing to attend. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically extremely vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from the pandemic illness. If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, the School will discuss these and provide reassurance of the measures they have in place to reduce the risk in school. Once back at school, the Head of Year and Tutors will provide support for the pupil as appropriate.

NB: If pupils choose to absent themselves from school (or their parents keep them at home) for a pandemic-related reason that is not specifically stated in the government guidance as being allowed, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

All other pupils will be expected to attend school as usual. The Attendance Policy will be followed in the case of pupils being absent from school without good reason.

### **Registration categories during a pandemic**

As detailed in the table on Pages 4 and 5, the School uses a range of registration codes to provide information about absence. However, in order to effectively respond to any government request for additional information during a pandemic, an additional set of codes may also be used, as appropriate.