



Attendance Matters

**Further information and contact details for reporting
all absences/appointments/lates etc.**

Direct Line: 01243 838028

Text: 07860 054358

Email: attendance@felpham.org.uk

Attendance Matters

Attendance plays a big part in your child's education and future. With poor attendance your child may struggle, fall behind, feel isolated and may not achieve their full potential. At FCC, we are all aware that the majority of our students and parents want to be in school, and that they understand the crucial link between school attendance and academic achievement.

In a recent report from Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, she begins by acknowledging that the fall in attendance rates as the country emerged from successive lockdowns has not yet returned to the high levels we now expect. Nationally, the number of children regularly missing school has more than doubled compared to pre-pandemic figures.

The report cites some sharp statistics linking attendance to achievement: *"While 78% of all children who were rarely absent in both years passed at least 5 GCSEs including English and maths, only 36% of children who were persistently absent in both years and just 5% of children who were severely absent in both years reached this same standard."*

Statistics from our own Year 11 results last August showed that students who had an attendance of over 95% performed on average half a grade better than those with an attendance between 90% and 95%, and almost a whole grade better than those with an attendance between 80% and 90%.

It is primarily for this reason that our expected attendance level for all students is 95% or better.

In addition to academic outcomes, Dr Rowena Christmas (Chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners), in a paper titled 'The Role of the GP in Maximising School Attendance' acknowledged that: *“Education is arguably the single most important factor in reducing trans-generational inequalities, and poor school attendance can negatively impact a child’s future both socially and developmentally as well as through reduced educational achievement.”*

Is my child too sick for school?

We appreciate that, as parents, it can be difficult to decide whether or not your child is well enough to go to school. To help avoid unnecessary school absences, we have produced the following as a general guide to help you decide whether your child is well enough to attend school when they have a minor illness. Missing lessons is upsetting for children and disruptive for the whole class and, as we have already mentioned, there is good evidence that children achieve better at school when they have good school attendance rates.

Parents have a duty to ensure their child is not absent where this can be avoided.

We expect your child to come in on occasions when feeling unwell with mild symptoms such as feeling sick without actually being sick, period pains, sore or sprained limbs, fatigue, a cough, cold or sore throat and aches and pains etc. We are happy to discuss and accommodate any mobility issues caused by sprained limbs etc.

The NHS provides useful advice to support you in this on their website page ***'Is my child too ill for school?'*** We have reproduced part of this in the table below:

Condition	NHS advice
Coughs and colds	It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or common cold . But if they have a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes.
Chickenpox	If your child has chickenpox , keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over.
Cold sores	There's no need to keep your child off school if they have a cold sore .
Conjunctivitis	You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have conjunctivitis .
COVID-19	If your child has mild symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, and feels well enough, they can go to school.
Earache/Ear infection	If your child has earache, they should be well enough to be in school (they can take over-the-counter pain relief). If your child has a high temperature, keep them off school until their high temperature goes away.
Hand, foot and mouth disease	If your child has hand, foot and mouth disease but seems well enough to go

	to school, there's no need to keep them off.
Head lice and nits	There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice.
Impetigo	<p>If your child has impetigo, they'll need treatment from a GP, often with antibiotics.</p> <p>Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment.</p>
Scarlet fever	<p>If your child has scarlet fever, they'll need treatment with antibiotics from a GP. Otherwise, they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks.</p> <p>Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics.</p>
Sore throat	You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat .
Threadworms	You don't need to keep your child off school if they have threadworms .
Vomiting and diarrhoea	Children with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 48 hours.

Mental health and school attendance

Sadly, we are aware that an increasing number of students are experiencing bouts of poor mental health, and we seek to work closely with families and children experiencing this.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, exams or variable moods.

It is important to note that these students are still expected to attend school regularly. In many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as much as being away from school may exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten a child's anxiety about attending in the future.

Professor Chris Whitty wrote to all Headteachers in September regarding school attendance following the recent pandemic. During that time, many parents felt less confident in assessing whether their child was well enough to attend school, but we are now looking, once again to develop the highest possible levels of attendance for all students.

In his letter, Professor Whitty stated: *“There is wide agreement among health professionals and educational professionals that school attendance is vital to the life chances of children and young people. Being in school improves health, wellbeing and socialisation throughout the life course. The greatest benefits come from children and young people attending school regularly.”* He also emphasised that: *“It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would*

include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat.

In addition to respiratory illnesses, we are aware that more children may be absent from school due to symptoms of anxiety than before the pandemic. Worry and mild or moderate anxiety, whilst sometimes difficult emotions, can be a normal part of growing up for many children and young people. Being in school can often help alleviate the underlying issues. A prolonged period of absence is likely to heighten a child's anxiety about attending in the future, rather than reduce it. DfE has published useful [guidance on mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance](#) and those who are experiencing persistent symptoms can be encouraged to access additional support.”

Reporting procedure

- ▶ You can contact attendance directly 24hrs a day. All absences need to be reported to the attendance office only, **no later than 8.30am** on the day of absence and a reason needs to be given. Absences that are not reported to attendance, or are without a valid reason, are marked as unauthorised.
- ▶ When reporting absences, we do not expect you to go into full detail, although a one word/line reason is required - whether it is a headache, sickness or a cold etc. Unfortunately, we cannot accept 'unwell' or 'under the weather' as a reason as the absence needs to be recorded accurately so that we can support where needed.
- ▶ Absences related to a student's menstrual cycle that are not supported by evidence of medical intervention will not be authorised. Please refer to the following guidance for further support around your child's menstrual cycle:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods/period-problems/>
- ▶ All medical appointments should be booked after school and during school holidays where possible. Any appointments during school hours should be reported to attendance in advance of the appointment and be supported with a copy of the appointment letter, email, card or text. We expect your child to come into school before and/or after their appointment (unless exceptional circumstances otherwise agreed).
- ▶ Unfortunately, we are unable to authorise holidays in term time. All 'exceptional circumstance' holiday requests must be accompanied by an Absence From Learning form which can be downloaded from the school website or your child can collect

a paper copy from the Attendance Office; advanced warning of absences needs to be given.

► Long term absences (of 5 days or more) may require medical evidence by way of an appointment letter/email/text or a picture of prescribed medication showing the child's name and the date it was prescribed.



Lates

Your child should arrive before registration at 8:25am. Any child arriving after this time will be marked as late and will need to sign in at the Attendance Office. If your child has a valid reason for arriving late (extenuating circumstances) then there will be no sanction attached to the mark, if there is no reason provided or the reason is not deemed valid, then a lunch time detention will be given.

Children who arrive late after the registers close and a reason has not been provided or is not deemed valid, will receive an unauthorised session mark. Children that persistently arrive late will receive after school detentions and be put on late report and monitored by the year office.

Unauthorised absence

Children who are absent from school where a reason has not been provided or is not deemed valid, will receive an unauthorised session mark. All unauthorised absences are monitored and when a student reaches 10 unauthorised sessions of absence (5 days) a referral is required to be made to West Sussex for a decision on a Fixed Penalty Notice. These cannot be withdrawn once made so please ensure that you communicate with the school.

Where does your child fit in?

What is their attendance %?	How many days of absence and how much learning is missed?	%of students achieving 5+ GCSE 5-9 Grades	What is the impact?
100% Attendance	0 days missed	81.7	Gives your child the best chance of success and they are likely to be happy, connected and learning
95% Attendance	9 days of absence 1 week and 4 days of learning missed	71.5	
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 days of Learning Missed	56.8	Makes it harder for your child to progress and they may be feeling pressure, feeling distant and having difficulty engaging
85% Attendance	27 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed Almost half a term missed	41	Has serious implications on learning and progress and they might be experiencing frustration, isolation and/or confusion
80% Attendance	36 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed Half a term missed	28.9	
75% Attendance	45 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed Almost 1 whole term missed	23.1	

The school, year offices and staff want to work with and support you around your child's attendance, so if there is any information that can help us to do this, then please do contact us.

November 2023

**All absences and attendance related queries should be sent
to Attendance at attendance@felpham.org.uk**

Year office contact details

Year 7 Leader Miss Greenland rgreenland@felpham.org.uk

Year 8 Leader: Mrs Elkins jelkins@felpham.org.uk

Year 9 Leader: Miss Hamblin lhamblin@felpham.org.uk

Year 10 Leader: Mrs Reeves sreeves@felpham.org.uk

Year 11 Leader: Mr James tjames@felpham.org.uk

6th Form Leader: Mrs Brixey zbrixey@felpham.org.uk