



Ferndale Primary School and Nursery

Headteacher: Miss Liz Horrobin
Ferndale Primary School and Nursery - Wiltshire Avenue
Swindon - Wilts - SN2 1NX

Dear Parents and Carers,

Monday 1st September 2025

We are delighted to welcome you and your children back to Ferndale for the start of a new school year. The beginning of term is always an exciting time – full of opportunities for learning, new friendships and memorable experiences.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk to you about the importance of attendance. Research shows that the very first days of term set the tone for the year ahead. Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson recently said: *“What we know is if children miss a day or two in the first couple of weeks of term, they're more likely to go on to be persistently absent. That means they're more likely not to be going to school on a regular basis, and all the consequences that has for their life chances.”*

Regular attendance is one of the most important factors in ensuring children succeed. Missing school, even just a few days, can:

- Cause gaps in learning which are difficult to catch up on.
- Affect confidence and increase anxieties about returning.
- Reduce opportunities for friendships and wider social development.

To give some perspective, **96% attendance** (the minimum recommended by the DfE) means a child misses just 7–9 days across the whole year. Anything lower can have a significant impact on progress. If attendance drops below 90%, a child is classed as a “persistent absentee,” which equates to missing one day every two weeks – over 19 days in a year.

At Ferndale, we want to both stress the importance of attendance **and celebrate it in fun and supportive ways**. This year we are introducing the following incentives:

✨ **Monthly Attendance Prize Draw** – Every child with 100% attendance (including punctuality) for the month will be entered into a prize draw. The winner will receive a goody bag and the exciting chance to be **Headteacher for the afternoon!**

✨ **‘Turn Up, Treasure Up’ Days** – On random surprise days, children in school will be able to search for a piece of treasure at lunchtime to keep.

✨ **Year 6 Gardening Leadership** – Year 6 children who attend school every day and on time for the first two weeks will be invited to help me decorate the garden beds on the main playground, leaving a lasting mark for the rest of the school to enjoy.

At the same time, we know that some families face genuine challenges. If a child’s attendance begins to drop, the class teacher will have an **informal chat** with you to understand if there is a reason and whether support can be offered. If attendance does not improve, you may be invited to meet with myself, our deputy or SENDCO to agree on an **attendance action plan**. Our aim is always to work with you to find solutions.

How you can help at home:

- ✓ Establish consistent bedtime and morning routines.
- ✓ Aim to book appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.
- ✓ Talk positively with your child about school – their teachers, friends and the exciting things they will be learning.



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Together, we can ensure every child has the very best start this term and throughout the year. Thank you for your support in helping us to make attendance a priority.

If you would like any support understanding this letter or have any further questions about attendance we would be very happy to support you, please pop along to the school office or ring the school on 01793332425.

Kind regards

Miss Liz Horrobin
Headteacher



Headteacher good bag for the monthly winner of 100% attendance and punctuality. With Miss Horrobin making the tea!



Examples of what will be waiting for every child who is in school on a 'Turn Up, Treasure Up' day!