



Ferndale Primary School and Nursery

Headteacher: Mrs Evans

Ferndale Primary and Nursery School - Wiltshire Avenue
Swindon - Wilts - SN2 1NX

September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Celebrating Great Attendance at Ferndale

At Ferndale, we want every child to have the very best opportunity to learn, thrive and feel that they belong. Being in school regularly and arriving on time are important parts of this. We also recognise that children do become genuinely unwell and that sometimes an illness can result in several unavoidable days away from school. We therefore want our approach to celebrating attendance to be positive, achievable and give every child repeated opportunities for success.

From this academic year, we are introducing our new Gold, Silver and Bronze Attendance Awards.



GOLD AWARD

100% attendance



SILVER AWARD

98%–99% attendance



BRONZE AWARD

96%–97% attendance

Children who achieve one of these awards will be presented with an official Ferndale Attendance Award certificate during a special assembly at the end of each long term.

A fresh start every long term

Importantly, the awards will reset three times each year: September–Christmas | January–Easter | Easter–Summer.

This means that every child has a fresh opportunity to achieve an award. For example, a child may unfortunately have chickenpox or another illness during the autumn term and need a prolonged period away from school. Although this may mean they do not achieve an attendance award at Christmas, their attendance starts afresh for the Easter award. They have another opportunity to work towards Gold, Silver or Bronze, regardless of what happened during the previous term.

We hope this makes our awards something positive for children to work towards throughout the year.

Why does attendance matter so much?

Every day in school matters. Regular attendance is not simply about achieving a percentage; it is about giving children consistent access to their education, their friends, their teachers and all the wider experiences that school provides. The Department for Education highlights that good school attendance supports children's learning, wellbeing and wider development. Missing school can affect progress, confidence and readiness to learn, while attending regularly helps children remain connected to their learning and their school community.

A child is considered persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of their possible school sessions. Put another way, 90% attendance over a full school year is approximately 19 days of school missed – nearly



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four school weeks. For a primary-aged child, that is a considerable amount of learning and classroom experience that cannot simply be recreated by completing work at home.

Every morning counts too – please be on time

Good attendance also means arriving at school on time.

The beginning of the school day is an important part of children's learning. When children arrive late, they may miss instructions, early learning activities and the opportunity to settle calmly alongside their classmates. Regular lateness can quickly add up to a significant amount of lost learning time.

There is also an important distinction in the attendance register. If a child arrives late before the register closes, they are recorded as late but present. If they arrive after the register has closed, this is recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session and therefore does affect their attendance percentage.

Working together

Our aim is not simply to reward a number. We want to build positive habits and help our children understand that being in school, every day they are well enough to attend, gives them the best possible opportunity to succeed. We also understand that there can be genuine barriers to attendance. Where a child or family is experiencing difficulties, we will continue to work alongside parents and carers to understand those barriers and provide support wherever we can.

We are really looking forward to presenting our first:

- 1 Gold Attendance Awards – 100%
- 2 Silver Attendance Awards – 98%–99%
- 3 Bronze Attendance Awards – 96%–97%

at the end of the Christmas term.

Then, in January, everyone starts again and has a brand-new opportunity to achieve an award by Easter.

Thank you, as always, for working in partnership with us to give every Ferndale child the very best opportunities to learn, belong and flourish.

Mrs Liz Evans
Headteacher
Ferndale Primary and Nursery School