

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy



## Fairholme Primary School

Updated: September 2024

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Attendance Team: Ruth Mwangi (Assistant Headteacher - SLT Lead), Jo Bird (Family Engagement Officer) and Sinead McManus (Pastoral Support Assistant)

Fairholme School is dedicated to ensuring that all children attend school every day that it is open. We believe regular attendance and punctuality are crucial life skills linked to academic achievement, personal development, and future success. Our aim is to foster a school environment where excellent attendance is the norm, and every child is supported to reach their full potential. It is imperative that children, parents, all staff and governors are equally committed to good attendance and punctuality (**96% and above**).

### Legal Framework

This policy is guided by:

- **Education Act 1996**
- **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**
- **Children and Families Act 2014**
- **DfE Guidance on School Attendance (2022 Update)**
- **Hounslow Local Authority Attendance Guidelines (2023 Update)**

These frameworks ensure we comply with legal obligations while supporting our pupils and their families.

### Aims and Objectives

- To ensure all pupils attend school regularly and punctually.
- To promote the importance of good attendance as a key factor in academic success and personal development.
- To work collaboratively with families and external agencies to overcome barriers to attendance.
- To embed a culture where good attendance and punctuality are recognized and celebrated.

### Core principles

- All stakeholders must understand that regular school attendance is essential for children to reach their full potential.
- Regular attendance helps children make the most of educational opportunities, building emotional resilience, self-esteem, and confidence, which contribute to long-term success.
- The school will work with children, parents, and families to resolve attendance issues.
- This policy aligns with other key school policies, including those on Anti-bullying, Behaviour, Inclusive Learning, and Equality of Opportunity.

### School Attendance Expectations

Excellent	<b>98-100%</b>	<b>Excellent</b> - blue celebratory Well done! Their excellent attendance has a positive effect on their progress and life in school. It also supports the development of positive work ethic.
Well done	<b>96-97%</b>	<b>Average</b> - green celebratory Strive to build on this. Work out ways to ensure that you are at school on time as this will be affecting progress in school.
Needs Improvement	<b>91-95%</b>	<b>Poor</b> – yellow reminder Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. Please work with the school urgently to improve the situation.
Of Serious Concern	<b>Below 91%</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b> – red Absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. We will work with you and the School Attendance Support Officer (SASO) to improve your child's attendance. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can 'authorise' absence. The school will not assess all reasons as 'valid'.

### Punctuality

The school day starts at 8:45am. The schools gates close at 8:50am and registers will be taken at this time. Pupils arriving after this point must report to the school office where they will be marked as late (L code), as will late arrivals in class before this point. Arrivals at school after 9:20am will receive a U code. These codes and times include the Early Years children of non-statutory school age, as this is in line with our whole school expectations.

After 5 lates recorded for a child, the Pastoral Support Assistant, Sinead McManus, will send a letter home to encourage improved punctuality and inform the relevant member of SLT, Ruth Mwangi, who will monitor the child's punctuality. If a child is in Year 5 or 6 arrives late when they have permission to walk to school alone, their parents will be notified.

We regularly talk about attendance with our families and look for ways to resolve any difficulties facing them in relation to their child's attendance and punctuality. Our Pastoral Support Assistant (Sinead McManus), Family Engagement Officer (Jo Bird) and Assistant Headteacher (Ruth Mwangi) are the first point of reference for our families with regard to attendance. However any member of the senior leadership team is happy to support families where required.

### **Managing Absences**

**First-day absence:** Parents must notify the school of their child's absence by 9 am each day, stating the reason and expected return date. The Pastoral Support Assistant (PSA) will follow up if no contact is made and make appropriate records of the discussion. The PSA will call all contacts until contact is made. **Please see Flowchart (Appendix 1)**

**Authorised Absences:** Includes illness, medical appointments, religious observances, and exceptional circumstances approved by the Headteacher.

**Unauthorised Absences:** These include holidays during term time without approval and absences without valid reasons.

### **Addressing Attendance Issues**

**Early Identification:** Regular monitoring of attendance data will help identify patterns and potential issues.

**Interventions:** These may include meetings with parents, attendance support plans, and referrals to external agencies like Hounslow's School Attendance Support Service (SASS).

**Support Systems:** We provide a range of support, including pastoral care, home visits, and engagement with external agencies.

### **Safeguarding Concerns**

We recognise that continued absence for a period of time could signify a safeguarding concern, in which case the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) will be alerted and as a school we follow the relevant safeguarding procedures. In the event of continued absence with no contact after 3 days, the case will be referred to SASS for further actions.

### **Special Considerations**

**SEND and Medical Needs:** Reasonable adjustments will be made for pupils with SEND or medical needs, ensuring they receive the same educational opportunities. The Pastoral Support Assistant may provide school staff and parents with an individualised Health Care Plan, from guidance of other professionals and alongside parents and class teacher, to ensure needs of the child are considered and met within school. On occasion a reasonable adjustment may take the form of a reduced timetable, but these adaptations will be made on a case by case basis.

**Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA):** Support will be provided to pupils experiencing anxiety or mental health challenges related to school attendance. We work with the child to reduce anxiety and identify triggers. We work in partnership with families, maintaining an open transparent approach to dealing with the child. Trusted adults are identified and used to support individuals and transitions are managed carefully. Through our PSHE curriculum we teach our children how to accurately name their feelings.

### **Absence**

Absences can only be authorised by school otherwise it will be recorded as unauthorised.

**Illness:** In most cases, a telephone call or a signed note/letter from the parent or carer informing the school that their child is away is acceptable. Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence, especially

when a child has regular or repeated absences for illness. An appointment card, text or prescription will be sufficient for this purpose.

**Medical/dental appointments:** Parents/carers are advised that, whenever possible, they should make routine medical and/or dental appointments outside of school hours. When this is not possible, pupils should attend for that part of the day they are available. In these instances, a copy of the text message or appointment card must be shown to the school office. Where more complex medical conditions occur, hospital letters and/or information will be required.

**Exceptional circumstances:** Pupils may miss school for exceptional reasons with the prior consent and knowledge of the school. Exceptional circumstances include, for example, a family bereavement and will usually be for a minimal period of time.

**Term Time leave:** TTL requests must be made in writing and should be addressed to the headteacher. The school's policy is that parent/s or carer/s should not take their children away on family holidays during term time and absence will be unauthorised. Legally, parents do not have an automatic right to take their child away from school during term time to go on a family holiday. .

**Religious observance:** The school acknowledges and respects that there may be some occasions when religious festivals may fall outside of the school holidays or weekends. Under these circumstances, special leave is restricted one day for any specific religious observance or festival. Additional days will be considered unauthorised. Parents/carers are required to inform the school of such an observance prior to the day of absence. Where the festival falls on a weekend, additional days will not be authorised.

**Exclusion:** In the rare event that it is necessary to give your child a fixed term exclusion, this will be counted as an authorised absence.

**Unauthorised absence:** Absences will only be authorised when relevant proof has been provided or deemed appropriate by the headteacher. Some examples of unacceptable explanations include:

- to go to a birthday trip out
- going to bed too late and being too tired to get up
- the closure of a sibling's school for INSET or any other reason

**Deletions from the register:** Pupils will only be finally deleted from the school's register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006).

### **Use of Attendance Data**

Attendance is monitored regularly and may be shared with relevant external agencies when attendance becomes a concern. These may include the local authority, School Attendance Support Service (SASS), social services, health agencies, and, in the final analysis, the courts. Home visits may also be made by either designated school staff, a School Attendance Support Officer (SASO) or by other relevant outside agencies in cases where pupils' attendance may provide a serious cause for concern.

The School's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will also regularly monitor and analyse pupils' attendance data. Regular reports to governors and/or outside agencies (including school inspectors such as OFSTED) are provided on this data.

### **Support systems**

The school understands that poor attendance and/or punctuality is often a sign of broader difficulties within a child's life. Please make the school aware of any difficulties or changes in the home or other circumstances which may affect their child's attendance, such as a close family bereavement, divorce, separation, or a change of home, for example.

### **Improving school attendance**

Fairholme Primary School offers a range of support strategies to manage its school attendance. It also implements a range of measures to improve its overall rate of attendance. These measures may include the following:

- discussion / interviews with parents and carers, both formal and informal
- agreed School/Parent/Pupil contract
- specific requests to outside agencies

- home visits, usually made by the SASO

## **Rewards and Sanctions**

### **Rewards**

We use a wide range of rewards to encourage and celebrate good attendance, such as:

- 100% attendance certificates (Bronze, Silver and Gold, see **Table 1.2**).
- We actively promote and celebrate good attendance with regular updates to parents and children.
- We send Marvelous Me messages to parents whose children have 96% attendance or above, informing them and celebrating their excellent attendance.
- In weekly assemblies an attendance trophy is awarded to the class or classes with the highest attendance and Cedric the Crocodile is awarded to the class or classes with the highest punctuality.
- A mufti day for the class hitting the school attendance target each week.
- Half-termly Pizza party in school, the weekly year group winners are randomly picked to celebrate their attendance.
- Weekly Parent Hub/Marvellous Me sent to parents celebrating attendance and punctuality winners for the week.
- We establish clear expectations of attendance which is set out to parents in the school's newsletter and presented at events such as parents evening.

Table 1.2 **100% Rewards**

<b>GOLD AWARD</b>	100% attendance all year	Certificate & badge given out during assembly
<b>SILVER AWARD</b>	100% attendance for a 2 <sup>nd</sup> term	
<b>BRONZE AWARD</b>	100% attendance for 1 <sup>st</sup> term	

A wide range of supportive **intervention programmes** such as:

- Support for Young Carers – attendance and punctuality of Young Carers is monitored regularly and Young Carers are flagged on all our school systems.
- Before and after school clubs
- SASO intervention

All support systems offered to both parents and pupils will aim to be supportive and child-centred where appropriate.

### **Sanctions**

In very extreme circumstances, after other measures and interventions have failed, the school may refer a persistent non-attendeer for legal support through the School Attendance Support Service and this could lead to court action or other legal sanctions.

## **Communication with Parents and Pupils**

Regular updates on attendance expectations and the importance of punctuality will be shared with parents through newsletters, parent evenings, and other communications.

Pupils will be engaged in discussions about attendance through the School Council and other forums.

### **Monitoring and Review**

For more details roles and responsibilities see *Appendix 3*.

**Governors:** The Governing Body will regularly monitor attendance data, review this policy annually, and ensure the school is adequately resourced to support good attendance.

**Headteacher:** Responsible for overall attendance and punctuality, and for authorising absences in exceptional circumstances.

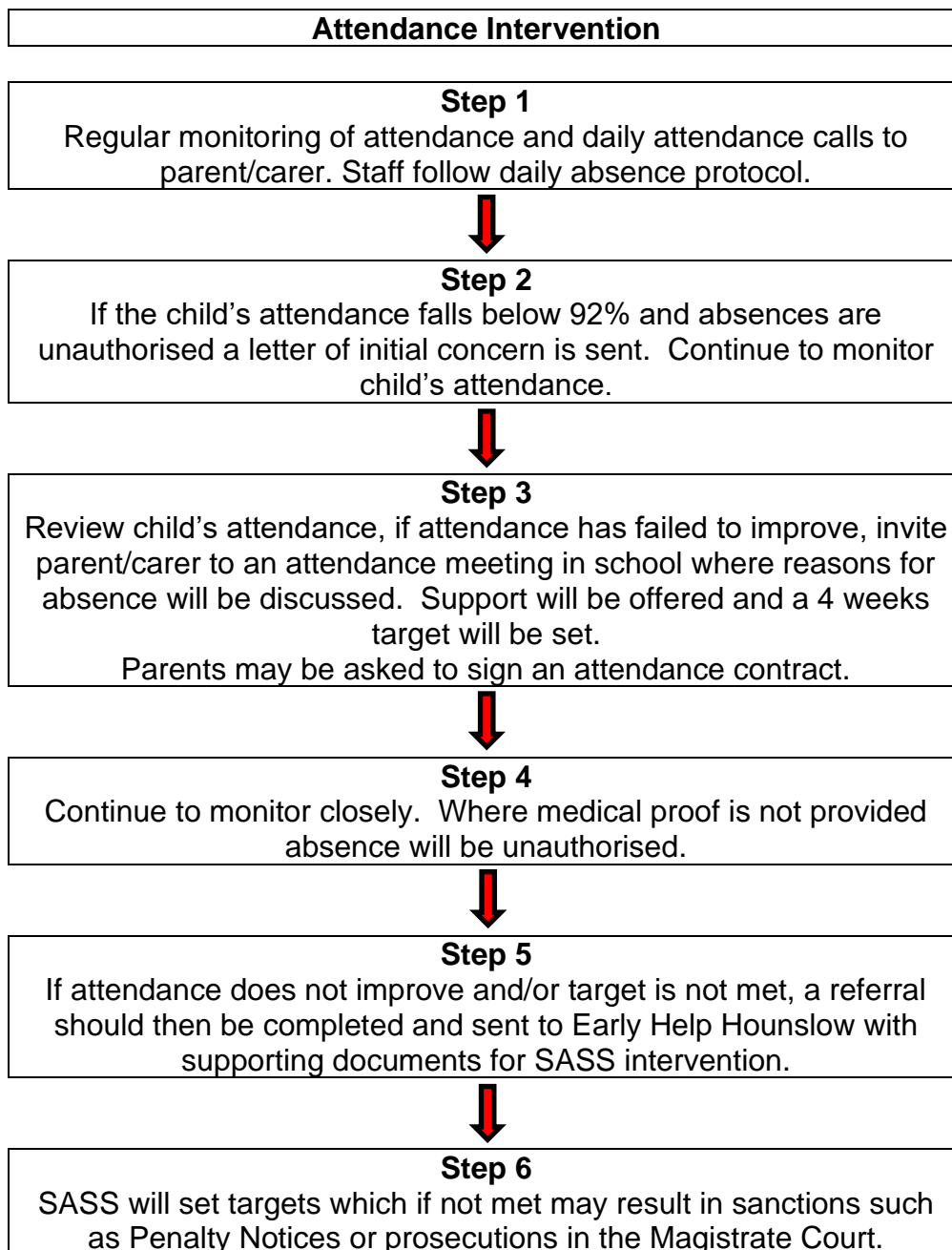
**Staff:** All staff are responsible for promoting good attendance and punctuality and supporting pupils in achieving this

**Additional Note**

**Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception and Nursery Children):**

It is very important that clear routines for good attendance and punctuality are established as soon as a child arrives at Fairholme Primary School. On acceptance of a place at Fairholme Primary School, families have signed up to the expectations that their child will attend every day school is open. The importance of attendance and punctuality is clearly established during initial meetings with parents new to the school and is spoken about regularly in conversation with parents.

## Appendix 1 Attendance Intervention Steps



## Appendix 2 Daily Absence Protocol

Every day, for every child that is absent:

1. After registers are taken and absences calls are noted (by 10 am)
2. We double check in school before we start calling.
3. We call everyone on the contact list until we get an answer. We ring each number of the contact list at least twice before we leave a message if there is a voicemail option.
4. **Once you make contact, stop this process – if not continue.**
5. Log on CPOMS.
6. We send an email or text to all contacts.

If no answer at all, from anyone on the contacts list of the child we consider:

- Does the child have additional agency support such as a social worker? – If so, contact them.
- Do we have any school intelligence? Does anyone know the family?
- We discuss with DSL
- We may make a home visit. If we can't get an answer we leave a standard note through the door asking the family to contact school urgently.
- On day 3 of no contact we refer to SASS/Children's service/MASH/Police to request a welfare check.
- We continue daily contact until we have received communication from the family.

This process is repeated every day for any child who is absent. These may be check-in/'How are you?' type phone calls for children where reason has been provided, but a phone call is still made.

For children who have notified school of term-time leave in advance, a daily phone call may not be considered necessary.

These procedures are in line with our attendance policy.



## Appendix 3 Detailed roles and responsibilities

### The role of the school

#### **The governing body's role and duties are:**

- To ensure that the national school attendance regulations, guidelines and other related legislation is fully and properly followed
- To ensure that the importance and value of good school attendance is promoted effectively to both pupils and their parents/carers and the reasons for it fully explained to them
- To undertake an annual review of the school's attendance policy
- To ensure the school is adequately resourced to be able to carry out this task
- To monitor the school's overall attendance and related issues through a standing item on the governing body agenda; this will take place at least once a term and on such other occasions as are deemed necessary.
- To ensure Continue Professional Learning (CPL) around attendance is offered to all staff on a regular basis.
- To ensure that the head teacher provides the governing body with an annual report on school attendance and related issues and on such other occasions as he or she deems necessary.
- To agree with the head teacher and senior leadership team (SLT) on their attendance targets.
- To make sure that all the school's attendance data is provided accurately to the LA (local authority), or national department, as required on time.
- To ensure that the school has a leader appointed for school attendance.
- To ensure that the school has appropriate systems and procedures in place to collect and analyse attendance data frequently to, for example, be able to analyse the causes and patterns of pupils' non-attendance throughout the school.
- To ensure that all staff within the school fully understand, use and interpret the data in order to devise appropriate solutions and to properly evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions.
- To ensure that all staff fully respect the confidentiality of any information or data collected on attendance from parents/carers or pupils alike, and not to reveal any data to any outside source without the prior consent of the head teacher or governors as appropriate.

#### **The Headteacher's role and duties are:**

- To be responsible for attendance and punctuality at Fairholme Primary School.
- To authorise absence in exceptional circumstances.

#### **The Assistant Headteacher's role and duties are:**

- To be the school's champion for attendance, and to promote good attendance and punctuality across the school.
- To be responsible for monitoring and reviewing attendance across the whole school.
- To compile attendance data reports for the Headteacher, governors and parents as required.
- To oversee the intervention and support programmes run in school to support attendance and punctuality.

#### **The Pastoral Support Assistant's role and duties are:**

- To be responsible for monitoring attendance daily across the whole school by following the **Daily Absence Protocol**.
- To attend meetings with parents of children whose attendance falls below the expected level.
- To send the reminder and follow up letters.
- To contact SASO when 4 week target for attendance under 90% has not been met.
- To ensure regular rewards and incentives are issued to promote good attendance.

#### **The role of staff:**

The staff are defined as all teaching, support staff, professionals and administrators employed by the school/LA or trust. All staff will:

- Actively follow all policies established by the governing body.
- Promote strenuously the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers and strive at all times to set a good example themselves.