

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Fairholme Primary School

Updated: March 2016

Ratified by Governors

Review: March 2017

Fairholme School is committed to ensuring that all children attend school. We believe that attendance is coupled to achievement and that regular attendance and punctuality is an important life skill.

In order for this Attendance and Punctuality Policy to be effective it is imperative that children, parents, all staff and governors are equally committed to its success. The Fairholme Family believe that good attendance and punctuality (**96% and above**) needs to be maintained and not left to chance.

Core principles:

- a) All parents, pupils and staff must appreciate that regular school attendance is essential if children at Fairholme Primary School are to reach their full potential.
- b) The school believes that regular school attendance is absolutely key to enabling children to be able to utilise the educational opportunities available to them. Regular attendance, should enable them to become more emotionally resilient, raise their sense of wellbeing and self-esteem, and encourage them to become generally more confident individuals. In the long term, this should help them to achieve more successfully in their later secondary school lives and in their adult careers.
- c) For this reason, the school will do everything possible to work with its children, parents and families to assist those with difficulties, including non-attendance, to try to resolve their problem areas.
- d) The school's attendance policy is one part of:
 - the school's positive links with the local community
 - a major strand to raise academic standards of all pupils within the school
 - our overall school improvement strategy
 - closely related to our policies on:
 - i. anti-bullying;
 - ii. behaviour;
 - iii. inclusive learning;
 - iv. equality of opportunity.

At the same time, the school's attendance policy has taken into account such legislation as:

- the Human Rights Act, 1998
- the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995
- the Race Relations Act, 2000, amongst several others

The legal framework

In England and Wales, the main legal framework includes the following key points:

- a) Under the 1944 Education Act, Section 35, it is the parent/s responsibility to ensure that their child/ren attend school regularly and receive a full-time education 'suitable for their age, aptitude and ability between the age of five and (and, as amended by later legislation such as the Raising of the School Leaving Age Order, 1972) to sixteen'. You must then do one of the following until you're 18:
 - stay in full-time education, e.g. at a college
 - start an apprenticeship or traineeship
 - work or volunteer (for 20 hours or more a week) while in part-time education or training.

A child is deemed to be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. In practice, many children may start in our nursery from 3 onwards and our reception classes from the age of 4 onwards, subject to available places.

- b) Section 39 of the 1944 Education Act permits local authorities to prosecute parents for failing to ensure their child's attendance at school. As at 2013, for example, the maximum possible fine per parent is up to £2500 per child. However, the legal framework of school attendance regulations is kept under constant review.
- c) Under the Education Regulations (2006), Pupil registration (England), the Governing Body is responsible and required to ensure that all admissions and pupil attendance registers are kept on a daily basis.
- d) The Education (School Attendance Targets (England) Regulations (2007)) require governing bodies of all maintained schools to set a school overall attendance target. Fairholme Primary School governing body has set the school an overall attendance target of **96%**. This is reviewed annually. Last year, the school achieved **94.90%**.

Internal policy

The Fairholme Primary School internal policy on each child's attendance is shown in Table 1.1

Defining absence

- When pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register will show whether the absence is regarded as being authorised or unauthorised.
- Under the regulations, absences can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parent/s or carer/s.
- Parent/s or carer/s are expected to advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence, provide a reason and state the expected date of return.

Table 1.1

Excellent	98%+ 0 lates	Excellent - blue celebratory letter Well done! This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.
Well done	96-97% 1 to 5 lates	Average - green celebratory letter Strive to build on this.
Needs Improvement	91-95% 6 to 10 lates	Poor - yellow reminder letter Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. Please work with the school urgently to improve the situation.
Of Serious Concern	Less than 91% 11 or more sessions late	Unacceptable - red letter 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 education welfare officer (EWO) 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'.

First-day absence

In the event of the school not being informed of the reason for a child's absence on the first morning of his or her absence, the school will automatically contact the home to check why the pupil is missing. The Pastoral Support Officer will make this call and keep appropriate records of the discussion as well as the date.

Absence regulations

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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. Under certain circumstances, parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence, especially when a child has regular or repeated absences for illness or the same designated 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.

Family holidays

It is the school's firm policy that parent/s or carer/s should not take their children away on family holidays during term time. Legally, parents do not have an automatic right to take their child away from school during term time to go on a family holiday. Parents should appreciate that if they take their child away for 10 days' holiday during school time, their son or daughter may have missed around 5% of their possible learning time during the academic year, reducing their child's attendance to 95%, which automatically means a child will fail to reach the school's attendance target of 96%.

Religious observance

The school acknowledges and respects the fact that, because of the multi-faith nature of British society, there may be some occasions when religious festivals may fall outside of the school holidays or weekends. Under these circumstances, special leave is restricted to no more than one day for any specific religious observance or festival. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised. Parents/carers are required to inform the school of such an observance prior to the day of absence.

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. The class teacher will make arrangements with you to have designated school work sent to your home.

Traveller children

The aim of this school is to ensure that the attendance of Traveller children is as frequent and continuous as possible.

Unauthorised absence

No absences will be authorised unless parent/s or carer/s have provided a reasonable explanation for their child missing school which has been considered to be acceptable by staff. Some examples of unacceptable explanations include:

- to attend a pop concert
- to avoid attending homework club
- to go to a birthday trip out

- going to bed too late and being too tired to get up
- parent commitment with a friend visiting
- the closure of a sibling's school for INSET or any other reason

Deletions from the register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006), pupils will only be finally deleted from the school's register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- the school's responsibilities are replaced by another school following a School Attendance Order
- the School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- a permanent exclusion has occurred and appropriate procedures have been completed
- there is a bereavement of the pupil
- the pupil has been successfully transferred to another school and documentation proving this has been received by Fairholme Primary School
- failure to return after an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil through official channels
- a serious medical condition which prevents a child's attendance or return to school before the end of compulsory school age
- after 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence, and after both the local authority and school have tried everything possible to locate the pupil

Using attendance data

Parent/s and carer/s are advised that their child's attendance is monitored regularly. Therefore, when (and if) their child's attendance becomes cause for concern, their attendance will be shared with relevant external agencies, such as the local authority, education welfare services (EWS), social services, health agencies, and, in the final analysis, the courts. Home visits may also be made by either designated school staff or the education welfare officer (EWO) or by other relevant outside agencies in cases where pupils' attendance may provide a cause for concern.

Governors and 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) 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. This might, for example, relate to problems at home or school. It would be appreciated and helpful if parents or carers could 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. Parents are free to advise the school when they believe their child may need extra support for any reason.

Some pupils often require more personal support than others. These include:

- looked-after children
- pupils with special or additional learning needs
- pupils with physical or mental health needs
- pupils with medical conditions (e.g. asthma, diabetes etc.)
- migrant pupils
- pupils who are learning to speak English or where English is not spoken in the home as a first language
- refugee pupils

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 include the following:

- discussion / interviews with parents and carers, both formal and informal
- the use of designated school attendance panels (meetings)
- specific requests to outside agencies
- home visits, usually made by the education welfare officer
- a wide range of **reward systems** 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 regularly send blue and green letters to parents whose children have 96% attendance or above, informing them and celebrating their excellent attendance.
 - During weekly assemblies we reward classes who have met a target of 96% or above. 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 similar assembly is run in EYFS although the class with the highest punctuality receives Peppa Pig.
 - Reward schemes such as attendance shop runs during the academic year where every time a child is in school for a full week, they receive a token. They can then spend these tokens at the attendance shop to buy prizes.
 - We reward classes whose attendance is 96% or above.
 - 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**

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

- A wide range of supportive **intervention programmes** such as:
 - Here Today; Here Again Tomorrow programme
 - Family and Community Clubs, which involving children and parents attending
 - Before and after school clubs
 - Walk to school programmes
 - Achievement for All programme
 - EWO 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-attende, or a pupil who is a cause for concern, for legal sanctions through the education welfare service and to the local authority for possible court action or other legal sanctions. This may happen when a child's attendance drops **below 91%**.

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 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 Head teacher's role and duties are:

- To be responsible for attendance and punctuality at Fairholme Primary School.

The Assistant Head teacher's role and duties are:

- To be responsible for monitoring and reviewing attendance across the whole school.
- To compile attendance data reports for the Head teacher, governors and parents as required.
- To attend meetings with parents of children whose attendance falls below the expected level.
- To oversee the intervention and support programmes run in school to support attendance and punctuality.

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.
- Teach at all times to the highest standards of their ability in order to provide pupils with the best possible teaching and learning experiences, encouraging them to attend schools and achieve their full potential.
- As part of their overall responsibilities, promote and participate in the monitoring of the school's attendance policy and participate in such annual reviews as are deemed

necessary; in order to achieve this goal, the head teacher and/or SLT will ensure that staff are fully trained to manage and implement all aspects of the school's Attendance and Punctuality policy.

- Ensure that the national school attendance regulations are fully complied with and implemented.
- Make sure that the school's registers are marked twice daily in accordance with the 1944 and 1996 Education Acts (and as amended by national governments) and the correct (and latest) codes are used and implemented.
- Participate in the collation of any reports on attendance or related issues to the governing body as required.
- Participate in activities which aim to ensure that all attendance data are collected and analysed frequently in order to identify and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Help to develop and participate in any multi-agency or interdisciplinary responses (such as case reviews) on attendance or related issues which may be deemed necessary.
- Ensure that not only is all attendance data kept on pupils kept accurately but to a required standard; this is a legally binding regulation – accuracy in collecting and recording attendance data is required for implementing court proceedings against parents/carers and these data could be subject to challenge or contest within a court's proceedings or jurisdiction.
- Ensure that all staff are made aware that fostering positive relationships with parents/carers and their pupils is essential in promoting positive attitudes towards school attendance.

The link with parents/carers

The school will promote regular school attendance and its school attendance policy with all parents/carers and encourage them to ensure that their children attend school daily except for good cause and in such exceptional circumstances as they receive the prior consent of the Head teacher.

The aim of the school and its staff will be to:

- Encourage parents/carers to ask the school for help if and when they are experiencing any personal or family difficulties which may be affecting their child's regular school attendance or on any related issues which may require any advice.
- We encourage parents to:
 - Help children to complete their homework
 - Read to them and provide practical support
 - Talk to their child/children positively about the school and its activities
 - Promote the concept of regular school attendance within the home
 - Try to avoid any unnecessary absences; for example, to make routine appointments to visit the doctor or dentist outside school hours or term time
 - Understand the importance of trying to perform all their school tasks to the best of their ability and to make as good academic progress as possible
 - Contact the school every time when their child/children is/are absent and to provide, whenever possible, an accurate or expected date of return, and an accurate note giving the reason/s for their absence upon their return
 - Inform the school of any circumstances which may have an impact upon their child's attendance
 - Endeavour to get them to foster a positive relationship with the school, its staff and Head teacher, and to be fully involved and engaged with school-related activities or events (e.g. parents' evenings, school concerts etc.)
 - Encourage parents/carers to provide regular routines at home such as for bedtimes, homework and preparing 'kit' for school

- Avoid taking holidays in term time unless absolutely necessary; term-time leave is strongly discouraged.
- Avoid taking their child/children for any unnecessary time off school, such as to go shopping during a school day, to help at home or to visit a relative
- Avoid allowing their child to take a day's holiday on their birthday if it falls during term time; birthday parties are often best organised after school or at weekends. This would be considered as an unauthorised absence.

Relationship with pupils

Make sure all pupils are aware that:

- Their attendance matters on a daily basis and the reasons for it
- There is a clear link between regular attendance and good attainment
- They understand their role in making the school attendance policy work effectively
- They can discuss school attendance and related issues at meetings of the School Council
- Their views will be taken into account when the school's attendance policy is drafted and/or amended

Overall responsibilities within the school

Table 1.3 provides a concise summary of all the roles and major tasks which need to be undertaken on managing attendance within the school throughout the academic year.

The use of attendance letters and forms

Fairholme Primary School uses a range of forms to manage its pupils' school attendance and when there is any seen cause for concern. These are now present in tables 1.4 onwards as exemplars.

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. Parents/Carers have accepted a place at Fairholme Primary School and are therefore signing up to agree that they will support the school in 96% attendance and punctuality for their child.

Table 1.3

Term	Month	Actions
Ongoing		
• Weekly attendance awards (class)		
Autumn	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse attendance of learners falling below 91% and explore issues and identify target groups Share information with parents, staff and EWO Identification of learning support groups considering attendance Newsletter – report figures and evaluate / communicate with parents Update and publish school leaflet regarding parent information on attendance
	October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors – analysis and evaluation of data Parents’ Evening – requirement to report figures and judgement
	November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute attendance report for ‘target group’ for autumn term Newsletter – report figures and evaluate/communicate with parents Governors – analysis and evaluation of data Target setting to include targets for attendance
	December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance rewards for 100% attendance – Bronze Award
Spring	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Print out and send home copies of all pupils’ attendance (autumn term report) Distribute attendance report for ‘target group’ for second part of autumn term Governors – analyse and evaluate data Newsletter – make a big deal about attendance – report on autumn term progress
	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review impact of additional support provision to include standards in attendance
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors – analyse and evaluate data Parents’ evening – requirement to report figure and judgements
	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance rewards for 100% attendance – Silver Award Attendance award 100% for the term
Summer	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to parents to include information about standards in attendance up to spring term. Print out and send home copies of all pupils’ attendance (spring term report) Distribute attendance report for ‘target group’ for spring term Governors – analyse and evaluate data
	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute attendance report for ‘target group’ for second part of summer term Governors – analyse and evaluate data Distribute annual school reports, making explicit attendance and grade
	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute attendance report for ‘target group’ for second part of summer term Governors – analyse and evaluate data Attendance rewards for 100% attendance – Gold Award Attendance award 100% for the term

Table 1.4

Date

Dear Parent/Carer of _____

Attendance

The school is very concerned that your child's attendance falls below the acceptable level required by the local authority of 96%. Please find attached a copy of your child's registration certificate which shows the following:

Current attendance: %

Current number of lates:

Being absent from school has a detrimental effect on your child's learning. It is vitally important that your child attends school regularly and punctually and that you let the school know by phone or in person if he/she is absent that day.

We will be monitoring your child's attendance for the next two weeks and if there is no significant improvement, you will be sent a 4 week attendance target letter.

The school expects children to be in the playground ready for the start of the school day at the following times:

8:45am for Nursery children in the mornings (be in the playground at 8:40am)

8.50am for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children (be in the playground at 8:45am)

8.55am for Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 children (be in the playground at 8:50am)

12:30pm for Nursery children in the afternoons (be at the gate at 12:25pm)

If you would like to discuss your child's attendance, please contact our Attendance Officer, Miss Whittington.

Kind regards

Miss Willis
Headteacher

Table 1.5

Date

Dear Parent/Carer of

Attendance Target

Further to my previous letter, I am writing to express my ongoing concerns regarding your child's level of attendance. Please find attached a copy of your child's registration certificate which shows the following:

Current attendance: %

Current number of lates:

School are now setting 95% attendance target for the next 4 weeks (*****) which we will review on ****.

School can only authorise an absence when medical evidence is provided. We do not expect a medical certificate from your GP, however the legal burden lays with the parent to provide: a date stamped appointment card / appointment letter, a label from any prescribed medication for the absence to be authorised.

If your child's attendance does not improve and absences are not authorised you will be invited to a school meeting where a referral to Education Welfare will be made.

Kind regards

Miss Willis
Headteacher

Table 1.6

Date

Dear Parent/Carer of _____

Attendance Meeting

Further to my previous letter, I am writing to express my ongoing concerns regarding your child's level of attendance. Please find attached a copy of your child's registration certificate which shows the following:

Current attendance: %

Current number of lates:

I would therefore like to invite you to a meeting in school with myself, Miss Whittington on ?????? at ?????.

This meeting will give us an opportunity to discuss ways that we can support you in improving your child's attendance and a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

I would be grateful if you could confirm your attendance, however, if this appointment is not suitable please contact the school office to arrange an alternative time.

Kind regards

Miss Whittington
Pastoral Support Assistant

Table 1.7

Date

Dear Parent/Carer of _____

Attendance – Renewed Target

As you are aware we have been monitoring your child's attendance and although the target set for your child was not met, this was due to authorised reasons. We will now set a further attendance target for your child to achieve a minimum of ...% for the followingweeks. This target will be reviewed on

If this target is not met you will be invited to a school meeting which will give us an opportunity to discuss support to improve your child's attendance and a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service.

If you have any queries about your child's attendance please contact the school office on 020 8890 2584 or email us at office@fairholme.hounslow.sch.uk.

Kind regards

Miss Willis
Headteacher

Table 1.8

Date

Dear Parent/Carer of

Attendance – Renewed Target

As you are aware we have been monitoring your child's attendance and although the target set for your child was met, attendance is still under 96% - a copy of the attendance summary is enclosed. We will, therefore, set a further attendance target for your child to achieve a minimum of 95% for the following 4 weeks (***) . This target will be reviewed on ***.

If this target is not met you will be invited to a school meeting which will give us an opportunity to discuss support to improve your child's attendance and a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service.

If you have any queries about your child's attendance please contact Miss Whittington on 020 8890 2584.

Kind regards

Miss Willis
Headteacher

Table 1.9

Date

Dear Parent/Carer of _____

Attendance – Continue to Monitor

As you are aware we have been monitoring your child's attendance, although the target set for your child was met, his /her attendance has started to deteriorate.

We will now set a further attendance target for your child to achieve a minimum of ...% for the followingweeks. This target will be reviewed on

If this target is not met you will be invited to a school meeting which will give us an opportunity to discuss support to improve your child's attendance and a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

If you have any queries about your child's attendance please contact the school office on 020 8890 2584 or email us at office@fairholme.hounslow.sch.uk.

Kind regards

Miss Willis
Headteacher

Table 2.0

Date

Dear Parent/Carer of

Attendance – Renewed Target

As you are aware we have been monitoring your child's attendance and the target set for your child was not met, this was due to unauthorised reasons. We will now set a further attendance target for your child to achieve a minimum of ...% for the followingweeks. This target will be reviewed on

If this target is not met you will be invited to a school meeting which will give us an opportunity to discuss support to improve your child's attendance and a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service.

If you have any queries about your child's attendance please contact Miss Whittington on 020 8890 2584.

Kind regards

Miss Willis
Headteacher