

# Attendance Policy

Fairisle Junior School



<b>Approved by:</b>	Full Governing Body	<b>Date:</b> 25/11/25
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## 1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all children
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure children have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Maintained schools: Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Child Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- The [Equality Act 2010](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a child's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- [Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, children and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific children, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for children who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all children, but adapts processes and support to children's individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual children or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting children' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific children, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The school has a link governor for attendance and their role is to monitor the implementation of this policy.

### **3.2 The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual children
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents/carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for children with SEND as required, and where children with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a child with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the child's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to children and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - Notifying the local authority when a child's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
  - Providing the local authority with the details of children who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days

- Providing the local authority with the details of children who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- › Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- › Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- › Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- › Liaising with children, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- › Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with children and their parents/carers
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Robin Hayes who works in close partnership with the Inclusion Team.

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office promptly.

### **3.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Transfer calls from parents/carers to the most suitable member of staff, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents**

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- › All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- › All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- › Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.40am on the day of the absence and if necessary each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than two emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance agreements that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support and engage with, where necessary, external support for maintaining good attendance

### **3.8 Children**

Children are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all children on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every child is:

- Present
- Attending a place other than school
- Absent
- Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a child is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a child is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.45am and ends at 3.15pm.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.20pm and will be kept open until 1.35pm.

### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The child's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.40am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via 02380733415. Absences should not be notified by email.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the child's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Opticians appointments are not authorised except in exceptional circumstances.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The child's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A child who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

The school will ask children and parents/carers if appropriate for a reason for lateness. The school will write to/telephone parents where punctuality is a matter of concern. Support will be offered if required depending on outcomes of these conversations. If circumstances allow, a penalty notice will be issued for persistent lateness. The impact of lateness will be made clear to parents where opportunities arise, e.g. parents' evening, annual reports to parents.

### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the child's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the child's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit, or if there are sufficiently serious concerns contact the police or Children's Services
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the child was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the child's social worker
- Where appropriate, offer support to the child and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the child needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 7 below), as appropriate

### **4.6 Reporting to parents**

The school will regularly inform parents (see the definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via a termly report and . Additional letters will also be sent where concerns are escalated, e.g. the child is a persistent absentee.

## 5. Authorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a child during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the child is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a child to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least three weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via our school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

### 5.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a child is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the child is travelling with them. In these circumstances a child will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the child is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

### 5.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

The headteacher will allow children to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the child is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the child not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school recognises that in many cases children want to attend school and on time, but are prevented from doing so by contextual factors. Taking this into consideration the school has chosen to do the following:

- › Provide a whole school event/prize/reward/experience at random days in the year, at least half-termly. By attending school that day, they have been able to experience something special.
- › Rewarding children with prizes where they have 100% attendance, due to the special nature of having attended all available sessions.
- › The school may use individualised reward schemes/sticker charts with specific children to incentivise attendance.

## 7. Supporting children with poor attendance

Our school will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### 7.1 Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans and other support has been unsuccessful, we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and will set up a meeting.

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but **not** criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 upon conviction.

### 7.2 Notice to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

A notice to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the child attends school.

It will include:

- › Details of the child's attendance record and of the offences
- › The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- › Details of the support provided so far
- › Opportunities for further support or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- › A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered, if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- › A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- › The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

### 7.3 Penalty notices

The headteacher (or a deputy or assistant headteacher, authorised by the headteacher), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school so chooses it can request the local authority issues a penalty notice.

Before requesting a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that child
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the child's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same child, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the child must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

## 8. Supporting children who are absent or returning to school

### 8.1 Children absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the child's needs, we will work with the child, family and professionals to ensure a bespoke plan is put into place to meet the child's needs. This plan is aspirational and formulated to be in the long term best interests of the child. The approach for each child will be individual and ambitious.

### 8.2 Children absent due to mental or physical ill health

The school will always seek to support all children to attend school. Where relevant, an Individual Healthcare Plan will be completed. This is designed to ensure the child has all the medical support they need to attend school successfully. The school will seek the support of health professionals. The school will have high expectations of itself to provide the care and support required, but also the child and the family to attend school.

### 8.3 Children absent due to other barriers to attendance

The school aims to provide an engaging and accessible curriculum that supports the achievement of all children. Through high expectations and a fostering of success we aim for all children to be motivated to attend school. Where support is needed, we will make reasonable adjustments and/or provide timely, appropriate, well-chosen and targeted interventions. We will be aspirational and support children to succeed and reach high standards.

Where a child has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, the school will inform the local authority.

## 8.4 Children returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Not all children who have experienced lengthy absences will need significant support, it is dependent on the context. However, teachers and leaders should be mindful of any lost learning and make relevant plans. Equally, if any emotional support is needed this can be implemented by the inclusion team.

## 9. Attendance monitoring

### 9.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual child and year group level.

Specific child information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

### 9.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify children, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify children whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### 9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual children, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the children we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with children and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including the SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Leads and the Child Premium Lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a child's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific children, where appropriate

### 9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a child misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of children who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these children.
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 7, above)

## **10. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **11. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting children with medical conditions

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Child is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Child is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Child arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Child is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Child is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Child is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Child is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Child is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Child is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Child is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Child is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Child has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Child has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Child of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Child is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Child has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Child is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Child is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Child is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Child has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Child is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Child is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Child is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Child is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every child absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Child is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Child's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Child is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Child has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective child not on admission register	Child has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays