

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY – FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

RATIONALE

Good attendance and punctuality is essential if students are to achieve their potential, enjoy school and prepare well for their future.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community
- Raise the students awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality for academic achievement and post 16 success
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, students and staff
- Work in partnership with parents and carers
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality

Safeguarding and Attendance

As mentioned later in the policy Fairfield agrees to monitor trends and patterns of absence for all students as a part of our normal operating procedures. However we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in student's attendance may indicate additional more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases i.e. FGM, Forced Marriage or Extremism on to the relevant authorities.

DEFINITIONS

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Absence from school is unauthorised (not allowed) if a student is absent from school or a lesson without permission. Whilst parents/carers/guardians can provide explanations for absences, it is at the Academy's discretion as to whether this absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

The change in legislation has meant the **removal of holiday entitlement** and Principals will now **not** authorise any holiday requests in term time, unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. A family holiday taken in term time may result in a warning and **Penalty Notice** being requested from the **Local Authority**.

As a part of our safeguarding duty (mentioned above) and our standard operating procedures, Fairfield High School will inform the local authority of the details of students who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission. We will also refer any instances of students' irregular attendance to the local authority.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

This can be categorised as having a percentage of unauthorised absences above the government threshold within an academic year. The current Persistent Absence threshold according to Government guidelines is **10%** of the school year.

Persistent absence is a serious problem for students. Much of the work missed during days off school is never made up, leaving these persistently absent students at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. A **Penalty Notice** may be requested if a student has a high number of unauthorised absences within an academic year.

PENALTY NOTICES AND PROSECUTION

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child(ren) attend school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (amended regulations 2013) to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the academy.

Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice is a fine up to £120 it was introduced under the Anti-Social Act 2003 and serves as a sanction for poor attendance. It is £60, if paid within the first 21 days but then £120 past the 21st day / within the 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the Local Authority will instigate Court Proceedings and the outcome of a prosecution could be up to £1,000 per parent/adult. This is an alternative to the prosecution of parents/carers/guardians for failing to ensure the regular attendance of a compulsory school age (age 5-16 years) student where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Examples of when a penalty notice may be requested from the Local Authority are listed below (the list is not exhaustive):

- Truancy
- Unauthorised leave during term time
- Delay in return from authorised absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival (after the close of register)

Prosecution

In cases where a penalty notice has been issued previously and/or there is a persistent failure to secure good attendance, we may refer the case to the Local Authority for criminal prosecution of the parent(s).

CHILD MISSING EDUCATION

“A child is deemed to be missing education if they are resident in Bristol, of compulsory school age and not on a school roll or educated at home.” (Elective Home Education).

The school will inform the Local Authority if they become aware of a CME and refer securely to childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk. The CME EWO is Rachel Dolling, rachel.dolling@bristol.gov.uk (January 2016) . The LA will advise the parent of legal requirements

and allocate a school place through Admissions or the Fair Access Panel, using a School Attendance Order if necessary.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Absence may be authorised in exceptional circumstances e.g.

- Absence due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. family emergencies, funerals etc.) can be authorised in advance upon application to the Principal. We will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances. Application can be done by completing an authorised absence request form available from school reception and must be submitted **two weeks** prior to the absence.
- Absence for legitimate religious observance (**maximum two days**) will be authorised on dates exclusively set apart for this purpose by the religious body to which the parents/carers belong.

PROCEDURES

The school will:-

- Implement and monitor robust systems to secure good attendance and punctuality including:
 - Accurate registration for all lessons using the DFE codes (appendix 1)
AM Registers close at 9.30am
PM registers close at 3.15pm
- Follow up any absences by
 - Ascertaining the reason for absences using 1st day texting and 3rd day calling when students are absent
 - Ensuring the proper safeguarding action is taken
 - Appropriate recording of reasons for absence
- Monitor trends and patterns of absence so appropriate actions can be taken e.g.
 - Follow-up (eg counselling, action-plans) for students with low attendance
 - Timely liaison with home
 - Referral to outside agencies
- Follow Local Authority guidelines, including legal proceedings or fixed penalty notices as appropriate, where attendance is low
- Use appropriate rewards and sanctions to encourage good Attendance and punctuality
- Nominate a member of SLT to lead on Attendance and Punctuality and liaise with Governors to promote good attendance and punctuality.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

It is important for Fairfield to have high levels of punctuality and attendance and Parents and Carers have a vital role to play in ensuring students attend regularly and punctually. We ask our Parents and Carers to work with us to promote and reward good attendance and punctuality. High attendance lends itself to resilience, excellence and quality aspirations. Colleges and employers

always ask for a report on candidate's attendance and punctuality at school and we always provide them with a true account.

In order to support the school we ask our Parents/Carers to follow the steps below:

1. In the case of illness please telephone or e-mail school on the morning of each and every day of absence
2. If this is not possible, write a note in the student's planner to explain absence on the students return to school. Sign and date the note and ensure students show their tutor.
3. Try to make medical appointments outside of school hours. If not possible, only remove the child from school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. Please ensure students show their Tutor their medical appointment card so they can be given permission to leave school.
4. Provide School with copies of any medical evidence such as appointment cards, prescriptions or medication packets so that medical absences can be authorised
5. Avoid taking holidays or request non urgent absence during term time. If this is unavoidable please contact the Principal in writing (**Appendix 2**). Although such absence will be recorded as an unauthorised holiday, and may incur a fine, it is better that we know a child is safe rather than missing.
6. If there are unavoidable family circumstances, please complete an authorised absence request form (**Appendix 2**), and/or arrange a meeting with the Assistant Principal for Attendance. Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request.

Policy created by: Assistant Principal

Related Policies: Safeguarding

Date: March 2017

Review: March 2016

References

Department for Education. 2014. *School attendance* [Online] London: Department for Education [Accessed on 01/07/2016] Available from

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/518586/Advice_on_school_attendance.pdf

Department for Education. 2015 *The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4* [Online] London: Department for Education [Accessed on 01/07/2016] Available from

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Education Welfare Service. 2013. BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL CODE OF PRACTICE - PENALTY NOTICES [Online] Bristol: Bristol City Council [Accessed on 23/03/2017]. Available from

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/239264/BRISTOL+PN++CODE+OF+PRACTICE++September+2013.pdf/61135e3d-0d25-4cb1-afb8-84ff76c93e0a>

**Appendix 1 – Department for Education (DFE)
ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS**

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
-	All should attend. No mark recorded	No mark
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

**Appendix 2 - FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL
REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME**

Child's name: Tutor Group:

Child's name: Tutor Group:

I am requesting permission for my child(ren) to be absent from school for the period:

..... to (inclusive)

Please indicate the reasons for this absence. If this is for a holiday, please indicate why this holiday could not take place in the course of the normal holiday pattern (please see the attached – guide for parents before writing your reasons)

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Signed..... **Parent/Carer** **Date**.....

Please return to reception by hand, email to **LTH@fairfield.bristol.sch.uk** or post addressed to **Ms L Thompson**.

for office use only.

FAO: LTH

THIS ABSENCE REQUEST IS: **Authorised** **Not Authorised**

Child's name _____ Class _____

Absence Dates Requested _____

Signed _____ Head of School (or SLT on behalf of the Head of School)

Date _____

Comments

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ABSENCE REQUESTS – A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Fairfield High School will consider every application individually; policy is NOT to grant leave of absence other than in the most exceptional circumstances as judged by the Head of School.

1. Applications

An application must be made in writing, with **appropriate evidence**, in advance of any intended absence by the parent/carer with whom the student normally resides. **If you are the child's parent but you do not normally live with the child you must seek the consent of the parent/carer with whom the child lives and that person should make the request.** Fairfield High School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing either by email or letter. Requests for absence for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods;
- overlap with beginning or end of term; and
- during periods of national tests i.e.: GCSE examinations.

2. Extended Periods of Absence

In considering absence for extended trips overseas Fairfield High School may take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school;
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, where huge distances and high costs are involved.
- whether or not the parent/carer has taken appropriate steps to minimise the impact of the absence on the school term.

Please note that the list above is not exhaustive and **does not** represent a list of reasons why leave may be authorised.

3. Academic Study

Whether the extended leave of absence is granted or not there will be an expectation that the student undertakes some school-set work during this period. It is the student's responsibility to collect appropriate work to complete.

4. Safeguarding and Extended Leave

For any request for extended absence parents/carers will be invited to a pre-absence meeting to discuss our duty to safeguard students who are leaving the country for extended periods of time.

5. Penalty Notices and Prosecution

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child(ren) attend school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (amended regulations 2013) to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the academy. A **Penalty Notice** may be requested if a student has a high number of unauthorised absences within an academic year. In cases where a penalty notice has been issued previously and/or there is a persistent failure to secure good attendance, we may request that the Local Authority supports us in a **criminal prosecution of the parents.**