

## **Fairfield High School ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### AIM

To raise levels of achievement by ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in the school.

### OBJECTIVES

- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
- To inform parents of attendance and punctuality issues.
- To identify causes of non-attendance and take action.
- To improve attendance of individuals, groups and the School.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents, carers and students
- To work with other agencies
- To recognise the diverse needs of our individual students, particularly when planning re-integration

### THE LAW

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). Any absence should be considered unauthorised unless there is a valid reason otherwise. Unauthorised absence at any level is considered unacceptable by both the school and local authority.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 currently allow headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

### PROCEDURES

#### Senior Leadership Team:

- Give attendance a high profile at assemblies, school events and in the school newsletter.
- Support HOKS on issues of non-attendance and internal truancy, remedying causes and applying sanctions.
- Report on attendance to governors.

#### Heads of Key Stage:

- Give attendance a high profile at assemblies and school events.
- Monitor Year Group attendance targets and record keeping.
- Implement system of rewards and sanctions.
- Support Form Tutors on issues of non-attendance and with internal truancy, remedying causes and applying sanctions.
- Meet with parents to discuss attendance problems as soon as they are identified.

- Support with referrals to the Local Authority via Learning Support Manager.
- Ensure work is provided for excluded students and long-term absentees.
- Look for patterns of absences and consider impact of curriculum upon attendance alongside other possible causes.
- Work with appropriate staff to create individual packages and re-integration plans.

#### Form Tutors:

- Be a good role model for students by actively promoting the schools attendance ethos both via discussion and practically.
- Give attendance a high profile.
- Praise students for arriving on time.
- Take prompt action where students are late or absent without explanation.
- Keep an accurate register. Students signing in after 9.00am should do so at the office.
- Complete absence reports as soon as possible and by end of day every day
- Return register to the Office promptly at the end of every registration.
- Inform HOKS and Learning Support Managers when absence is causing concern.

#### Attendance Officer/Learning Support Manager:

- Oversee administration of the SIMS Register system. Streamline and make adjustments to systems and procedures.
- Keep parents informed of any unexplained absences before they become unauthorised.
- Support the work of SLT, HOKS and Form tutors by:-
- Providing regular attendance information.
- Phoning students on 1st Day Contact List and monitoring attendance and punctuality alerting Form Tutors and HOKS when concerns arise.
- Issuing attendance letters and organising Attendance Panels.
- Working with colleagues to identify causes of non-attendance.
- Meeting with HOKS regularly to make and monitor interventions and referrals.
- Keep staff informed of attendance issues via attendance monitoring spread sheet.

#### Parents

- Ensure that children leave for school on time every day.
- Provide written explanation for children's absences from school.
- To provide medical evidence E.g. Doctors note if requested for either frequent or extended periods of absence (see appendix...)
- Endeavour not to take children out of school in term time.
- Where it is not avoidable to take children out of school during term time, a holiday form must be completed and permission granted by the head teacher.
- Notify the school as soon as problems arise with child's attendance.
- If no letter has been sent in advance, telephone the school on the first morning child is absent and regularly keep the school informed by telephone if the absence exceeds three days.
- Support the school in its ethos relating to the direct link between attendance and achievement.

#### Students:

- Arrive at 8.50am for registration every morning and 1.20pm for registration every afternoon.
- Students arriving after 9.00am should sign in at the school office.
- Be on time for lessons.
- Make sure a note is sent from parents to explain absences.
- If late sign in at the Office.
- If need to leave early sign out at the Office.
- Tell Form Tutor or HOKS or Learning Support Manager if having any problems attending school.

#### Support Available:

- Target attendance intervention accessed through HOKS referral.
- Attendance Reports.
- Attendance panels and regular reviews.
- Meetings with HOKS, EWS and other agencies to provide support for children and their parents.

- Re-integration through student services for casual admissions and on return from long-term absence.
- Re-integration timetables where appropriate.
- Individualised curriculum where appropriate.
- Learning Support Managers support including possible home visits and 1-2-1 work.

### Rewards

- Commendations.
- Half-termly, termly and annual certificates and letters home for individuals and form prizes for groups.
- Good attendance references to potential employers/colleges.
- Improved academic attainment

### Sanctions

The school reserves the right to use any of the following sanctions to fulfil its obligations with respect to school attendance:

- Form Tutor detention.
- Subject Department detention.
- HOKS detention.
- EWS involvement and referral.
- Parenting Contracts.
  - Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that if a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the school offering the parent the opportunity to enter into a parenting contract following a pupil's truancy under section 19 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (with The Governing Body).
- Penalty Notices issued by the school.
  - Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that if a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the school issuing a penalty notice under section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (by Headteachers and Deputy and Assistant Heads authorised by them).
- Parenting orders or penalty notices can also be issued by the LA.
- Prosecution by the LA on behalf of the school.

### **Signed:**

S L Gaston, Head Teacher

P James, Chair of Governors

### **Date:**

## **Appendix 1:**

We will always consider every case on an individual basis, but the following also apply:

### **Accepted medical evidence for absences of one day or less:**

(School Office can photocopy the evidence)

- Doctor's or Hospital appointment card from surgery reception showing date and child's name.
- Letter showing appointment date and child's name.
- Copy of prescription showing date of issue and child's name.
- Copy of medication box/pack showing date of issue and child's name.

### **For longer periods of absence:**

- Letter from recognised health professional (including mental health) advising of need for absence, hospitalisation or long-term treatment.
- We may also request permission to contact the child's GP or other health professional to confirm the causes of absence.

Appendix 2:

**EXAMPLE LETTER**

**UNDER 95% ATTENDANCE**

Dear

**RE:**

I am concerned that ..... attendance level this academic year has fallen beneath the National Guideline of 95%. Currently..... attendance is..... %. Whilst we are aware that there may be valid reasons for some or all of these absences, poor attendance will only have a negative influence on your child's education and could result in the intervention, leading to penalty notices or fines.

We are keen to work with you to ensure that your child achieves their best at Fairfield. When a student's attendance becomes a concern, we may request a letter from your GP to support any absences to ensure that they are attending school wherever it is possible.

For any unauthorised absences, please send a note explaining the absence. If you would like to come in and discuss any attendance issues you may be having with either me or the Head of Key Stage ....., please contact us to arrange an appointment.

I appreciate your support in this matter and hope to see an improvement in your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

EXAMPLE LETTER

GP CONSENT

Dear

**Re:**

We are concerned that..... attendance has fallen below the National Guideline of 95%. Currently .....attendance is .....%. Poor attendance will only have a negative influence on your child's education and could result in an intervention, leading to penalty notices or fines.

The government's guideline for attendance is 95%. Since the beginning of the academic year has missed .....registration sessions. ....has also been marked as late for..... registration sessions. We understand that there may be medical reasons as to why has not been able to be in school and we are formally requesting that absences due to illness are covered by a doctor's note, signed by your GP, stating that .....is too unwell to attend school.

If for any reason you are unable to provide evidence of a medical appointment then I have enclosed a medical consent form for you to complete and return to me. This will be sent to your GP and will allow me to speak to him/her regarding .....ability to attend school. This consent does not authorise me to gain specific information regarding your child's health nor their medical records. It will only give me the GP's opinion, as to whether .....was unfit to attend school on medical grounds. If the doctor is unable to confirm any absence on medical grounds then the absences will be unauthorised.

Failure to return this form or provide doctor's notes for absences will result in the absences being unauthorised which may lead to legal action being taken against you.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please contact me at school.

Yours sincerely

**EXAMPLE**

**PERMISSION TO CONSULT MEDICAL PRACTITIONER**

**RE:**

**DOB:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the parent/carer of the above named child hereby give permission for Pippa Hart, on behalf of Fairfield High School, to consult the Medical Practitioner named below (or other Medical Professional at the same Practice) about the state of health of \_\_\_\_\_ as it relates to their ability to attend SCHOOL on a regular basis.

**MEDICAL PRACTITIONER INFORMATION**

DOCTOR NAME .....

POSITION .....

ADDRESS\* .....

.....

.....

.....

SIGNED .....

*Parent/Carer*

\* Please include name of the hospital/surgery, where applicable