

Featherstone High School

Student Attendance, Absence & Punctuality Policy



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Non Statutory Policy

Contents

1. Aims	1
2. Legislation and Guidance	1
3. Roles and Responsibilities	1
3.1 The Governing Board	1
3.2 The Headteacher/Senior Pastoral Team	2
3.3 The KS3 and KS4 Administrators	2
3.4 The Senior Pastoral Team under the Leadership of the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)	2
3.5 Class Teachers/Form Tutors	2
3.6 School [admin/office] Staff	2
4. Recording attendance	2
4.1 Attendance register	2
4.2 Lateness and punctuality	3
4.3 Unplanned absence	4
4.4 Planned absence	5
4.5 Following up absence	5
4.6 Reporting to parents	5
4.7 Truancy	5
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	6
5.1 Reducing persistent absence	7
5.2 Referrals to the Local Authority (LA)	7
5.3 Children Missing Education (CME)	8
5.4 Legal sanctions	8
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	8
7. Attendance monitoring	9
8. Leavers	9
9. Withdrawals	9
10. Safeguarding	10
11. Removing a Student from the School Roll Related to Non Attendance	10
12. Monitoring arrangements	10
13. Links with other policies	10
Appendix 1	11
Appendix 2	13
Parenting Interventions	13
Parenting contracts	13
Parenting orders	13
Education Supervision Order	13

1. Aims

At Featherstone High School we are fully committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending school and lessons.

2. Legislation and Guidance

Parents have a legal duty to ensure efficient and full time attendance at school of registered pupils of statutory school age (Education Act 1996). This is the legal requirement. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine).

Regular attendance is defined to be in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school. Supreme court ruling; April 2017.

Regular attendance is attendance at school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an authorised reason to be absent.

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#).

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Senior Pastoral Team will present attendance reports to the Full Governing Board committee which will outline our attendance figures which will include a breakdown of attendance by year group, gender, ethnic origin and those with vulnerable groups such as SEN and LAC/PLAC.

3.2 The Headteacher/Senior Pastoral Team

The Headteacher/Senior Pastoral Team is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the Featherstone High School
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- referring cases to the LA for prosecution.

3.3 The KS3 and KS4 Administrators

The school KS3 and KS4 administrators:

- Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Report concerns about attendance to the Senior Pastoral Team.

3.4 The Senior Pastoral Team under the Leadership of the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)

- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence and persistent lateness
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance & punctuality issues
- Decides when to refer to the LA to issue fixed-penalty notices.

3.5 Class Teachers/Form Tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for accurately recording attendance and lateness on a daily basis to lessons/registration, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via SIMS.

3.6 School [admin/office] Staff

School [admin/office] staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absences/lateness and record it on the school system (SIMS).

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

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 keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by the time determined on their respective timetable on each school day.

Please note:

First session

The register for the first session will be taken at:	and will be kept open until :
8.30am	8.55am

Second session

The register for the second session will be taken at	and will be kept open until:
12.30pm Period 6 / LS2)	12.45pm
The register for Year 7 who are on LS2 will be taken at:	and will be kept open until:
1:10pm	1:25pm

4.2 Lateness and punctuality

Late arrival after registration closes, without an acceptable reason can be marked as an 'unauthorised absence'. Parents remain responsible for their child's punctuality. Arriving late to school on a consistent basis can lead to longer-term academic and social issues.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed, it will be marked as late, using the appropriate code and issued with a detention in line with our behaviour for learning policy. This will be a same day 30 minute detention in the Main Hall
- After the register has closed, it will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code and issued with a detention in line with our behaviour for learning policy. This will be a same day 60 minute late detention in the Main Hall
- In situations where lateness is due to exceptional circumstances, a detention will not be issued.

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure that their son/daughter is punctual to school. Please note that parents can be issued with a fixed penalty notice if their son/daughter is persistently late to school or for lessons. The fixed penalty notice will be issued by the London Borough of Ealing and

is £60, rising to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. If parents do not pay after 28 days they could be prosecuted and fined up to £2,500, or face a community order or a jail sentence of up to three months. Parents could also be ordered to attend Parenting Classes.

4.3 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/carers are required to:

- Ensure that their child attends school on each day the school is open for the pupils, unless there is an authorised reason to be absent. Only the school can authorise an absence.
- Absence should only happen;
 - a. When your child is significantly/symptomatically ill and therefore unfit to attend school. There should be an observable symptom; 'feeling unwell' is not enough. We may ask for medical verification where illness-absence is frequent, prolonged or where there are absences before or after a school holiday. If your child has a documented medical condition that hinders regular attendance, please let us know
 - b. If there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty, please telephone or email us on the first morning of any absence to give us the reason and tell us when your child is likely to return to school. Thereafter, please keep us updated daily.

We expect parents/carers to:

- Provide a timely reason; satisfactory to the school needs to be given for an absence; otherwise the absence will remain unauthorised
- Providing medical verification where illness-absence is frequent or prolonged or where asked to do so by the school
- Arranging all non-emergency medical and dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
- Keep the school updated by telephone, email or letter of any changes of circumstances. Making sure we always have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers and emergency contact details.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

If a student is a persistent absentee (below 90% attendance) absences will be unauthorised until authentic evidence has been received.

4.4 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents/carers are required to provide the school with written notification and where possible, a copy of the appointment letter.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and return to school after they have attended their appointment where possible.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school will consider authorising.

The school will explore all reasonable avenues of support for students and families before such decisions are made.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, Featherstone High School will:

- If a reason for absence is not presented to the school, contact parents/carers on the first day of absence to ascertain the reason why
- In some cases, where there are safeguarding concerns an unannounced home visit will be conducted by school staff and/or our safer schools police officer
- If your child has a documented medical condition, we will devise a care plan with you (and in some cases with your GP or consultant) to support your child in school; this might also require us to refer to the school nurse
- If your child has a documented medical condition that hinders regular attendance, we will wish to discuss this with you and devise a care plan to support missed learning as necessary
- Where necessary, implement parenting contracts to clarify what support will be put into place to support students and their families to improve their attendance and/or punctuality
- Via the local authority issue fixed penalty notices to parents who do not send their child to school on a regular basis and/or take unauthorised extended leave from school
- Work with the local authority and parents whose children have irregular attendance to issue parenting contracts, parenting order or/and an Education Supervision order
- Provide parents with information on the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality to school via our website.

4.6 Reporting to parents

Featherstone High School will:

- Provide parents/carers with access to their child's attendance profile via ClassCharts. Alternatively, parents will be provided with printed attendance certificates on request
- Include attendance and punctuality within student academic reports and explain how this relates to their academic progress.

4.7 Truancy

Truancy is any intentional, unjustified, unauthorised, or illegal absence from school or lessons and is a deliberate absence by a student's own free will.

If a student truants from school or lessons (once they have attended school), parents/carers will be notified and appropriate sanctions (to the child) will be put in place in line with our Behaviour for Learning policy. This could include the following:

- Pastoral detention
- Senior Leadership detention
- Headteacher detention.

See sections 2 and 5 for details on parental responsibility.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Headteacher is the only person who has the authority to authorise school absences during term time. This responsibility is delegated to specific members of staff.

The governors of the school have asked the Headteacher not to authorise leave if a request is to attend a wedding, family gathering or holiday. Requests will only be considered if there is an exceptional circumstance or an emergency.

A maximum of 10 days will only be authorised if there is an emergency or an exceptional circumstance. If 10 days are granted and the student fails to return within agreed dates the student may be removed from the school roll and the parents/guardians will be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

If the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the decision, they can do so by requesting a meeting with the Headteacher. If unauthorised leave is taken, the local authority on behalf of Featherstone High School, will issue a fixed penalty notice, per parent, per child of £120.00.

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

Parents/carers are required to submit a request by completing a form at least 4 weeks in advance for the school to consider. We will respond to each request within 5 working days and in some cases request a meeting with the parent/carer to discuss the request.

Parents sometimes confuse 'telling' the school as being good enough, this is not so.

If a child goes abroad during a school holiday period, the parent must make definite arrangements so that they return in good time for school re-opening. Absence claimed as illness before or after a school holiday must be reported during the period of absence and medical evidence produced on return to school, otherwise the absence will be regarded as unauthorised leave.

If a family experiences unexpected delays in returning from a trip abroad or from within the UK, for whatever reason, the school will require documentary evidence accompanied with proof of original return dates i.e. tickets or an official travel plan showing intent to return on time. Medical documentation should be in English.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and parents/carers may be liable for a fixed-penalty fine. Where a child's whereabouts cannot be established he/she may be regarded as a 'Child Missing Education'. In certain instances, the child may also risk losing their school place. If a child is abroad at the beginning of a school term and absences extended, their school place may be at risk.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- 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 pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

5.1 Reducing persistent absence

A pupil becomes a 'Persistent Absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling at any point in the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's full support and cooperation to tackle this. We monitor all absences thoroughly and any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority. If a student's attendance meets 93% they are at risk of becoming a PA. Absences for illness will only be authorised with written evidence which might include a medical note or appointment card from a GP or consultant.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we will combine this with academic mentoring (in examination years) where absence affects attainment. All of our PA pupils and their parents may be subject to an Action Plan and or a parenting contract and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a learning mentor or family support worker (and in some cases both). All PA cases are automatically made known to the local authority Education Welfare Officer.

5.2 Referrals to the Local Authority (LA)

All unauthorised absence, including significant lateness is reported to the LA School Attendance Service to seek additional advice and support for parents as necessary. Where unauthorised absence is frequent and or persistent, sanctions will be imposed and will include warnings, penalty notices (Fixed Penalty Fines), prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.

Where a child or family is away from home including abroad, and unable to return home due to the pandemic/travel restrictions, parents are expected to provide the school with detailed information as to the whereabouts, reasons for travel and estimated return dates and we will do our best to support you.

Where the school is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence will not be authorised, and this could result in Fixed Penalty Fine (please refer to our main Attendance Policy) Where such cases are not satisfactorily explained and evidenced, we cannot guarantee to hold a place open for your child.

Please be aware that leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. There is no entitlement to time off during term time for the purpose of a holiday.

5.3 Children Missing Education (CME)

Where the school is unable to contact a child/family over a 3-day period, they will contact the School Attendance Service to carry out enquiries to try to locate them. A door-step home welfare visit will also be undertaken.

Where the school and the Attendance Service have failed to locate the child/family within 10 days, the child will be referred to the LA Children Missing Education Officer (CME officer) who will undertake additional checks with other agencies to locate them, including consultation with social care, the police, health and housing.

Where these enquiries do not lead to confirmation of the child's whereabouts, the matter will remain open to that service who will widen their enquiries. In these circumstances, the school cannot guarantee to keep a school place open for your child.

- Parent, stepparent, or legal guardian
- Grandparent
- Brother or sister
- Aunt or Uncle.

If you are aware of a private fostering arrangement, please contact the school so that we can help to offer you and your family additional support.

5.4 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Strategies for rewarding and improving attendance.

- Promote the need for good attendance and punctuality throughout the curriculum and pastoral programme especially during assemblies and tutorial
- Provide parents/guardians with access to their child's attendance profile via ClassCharts
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward outstanding attendance with individual and class prizes on a regular basis
- Provide parents with information on the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality to school via our website.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Senior Pastoral Team at our school monitor pupil absence on a [daily/weekly/monthly/termly] basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2). Parent/carer are expected to call the school each day their child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer and our school nurse.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence 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 compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Featherstone High School collects and stores attendance data, and uses it to track and monitor patterns of attendance. These reports inform strategic planning and interventions in order to maintain a high standard of attendance and punctuality to school and lessons.

8. Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than at the end of Year 11) parents are asked to give the school comprehensive information about your plans; including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known.

This should be submitted to our school in writing. A leaver's form is available from the school office which you should complete. (A destination country or another named Local Authority is not sufficient).

9. Withdrawals

Parents who remain resident locally can only withdraw their children from school if they have a confirmed start date at another school or are undertaking to educate the child at home (Home

Education). If the latter, this must be confirmed in writing to the school by the parent. Pupils remain registered at school until such conditions are satisfied.

10. Safeguarding

When a child leaves and we do not have information about where they have gone/will be educated, then he/she is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education'. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Social Services, the Police, benefits/council tax records and other agencies, to try to locate your child. By providing the information aforementioned these investigations can be avoided.

If at any time the school are concerned for a child's safety or welfare from any year group, we will consult with Ealing Social Care in line with our Child Protection Procedures.

11. Removing a Student from the School Roll Related to Non Attendance

Featherstone High School will consider removing a student from the school roll for the following reasons:

- If the student no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from Featherstone High School and is not attending school
- If they are absent from school for 20 consecutive school days and are not able to attend school due to distance
- If they are absent from school for 20 consecutive school days and the school is unaware of the child's and family's location after reasonable enquiry
- If they have an authorised absence and they have not returned within the agreed dates.
- If emergency leave has been authorised and the student does not return to school for 10 days after the agreed date of return and reasonable enquiry has been undertaken.

Once a student has been removed from the school roll they no longer have a place at Featherstone High School. In order to apply for a place, families will need to make an in year application directly to Ealing High School admissions.

12. Monitoring arrangements

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

13. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy.

Appendix I

Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2

Parenting Interventions

Parenting contracts

Parenting contracts are voluntary but formal written agreements between parents and the local authority or Featherstone High School. It contains a statement by the parents agreeing to comply with the requirements of the contract, and a statement by the local authority or Featherstone High School agreeing to provide support to parents for the purpose of complying with the contract. Parenting contracts can be used in cases of misbehaviour or irregular attendance.

Parenting orders

Parenting orders can be imposed by the court following a successful prosecution by the local authority for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

Parenting orders include a requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions to receive help and support to improve their child's behaviour for up to 3 months, and a requirement for parents to comply with such requirements as are specified in the order for up to 12 months.

Education Supervision Order

An Education Supervision Order is an order granted in the Family Proceedings Court requiring a parent/s and their child to follow directions made in the Order and work alongside the County Attendance Officer, as the Supervising Officer, to improve the child's school attendance.