

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Date:** September 2022

### Document Control

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### Document Approvals

This document requires the following approvals:

Approval Sought From	Name	Date
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### Document Distribution

This document will be distributed to:

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All staff	Governors/Teachers/ Associate staff/	July 2016
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## Section 1: Statement of Values

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that our pupils feel safe and are able to learn with minimum disruption to lessons. Our school is calm and orderly, with an atmosphere conducive to creating a compelling learning experience.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, we work with pupils and families to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with the schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the governing body, the local authority and other local partners.

We aim for our Attendance Policy to provide guidance to pupils, parents and staff. A successful attendance policy requires the commitment and consistency of practice of all staff to ensure that pupils know the standards expected of them. It requires parents to work in partnership with the school so that all members of the school can secure excellent attendance. Learners should be treated fairly and consistently in line with our shared values, our learning behaviours and taking into consideration our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Our school has a supportive, family ethos where everyone is encouraged to achieve their potential. We build positive relationships, celebrate diversity and promote tolerance. We believe good manners and respect for each other are of the utmost importance and expect the highest standards of behaviour. We work together in collaboration and are committed to furthering our learning. We believe that to unlock potential in all our children and all our staff our core objective is simply:

**TO CREATE A COMPELLING LEARNING EXPERIENCE.**

We do this by believing in people and positive relationships.

## **Section 2: The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education**

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Good attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. **The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 usually have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.**

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms.

To this end, we as a school will do as much as we can to ensure that all students achieve maximum possible attendance, to keep in line with the National target of 95% and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

## **Section 3: Aims of the Attendance Policy**

- We will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels safe and feels a sense of belonging.
- We will make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, families, school staff and governors.
- We will develop and implement a whole school approach to rewards and sanctions in line with the Compelling Behaviour Policy. These will acknowledge the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- To meet these objectives, the school will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice, guidance and support. A variety of means of communication will be used; phonecalls, letters, postcards, certificates, social media.
- We will develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- We will reduce the number of persistently absent pupils (attendance lower than 90%) and severely absent pupils (attendance lower than 50%) within the school.

## **Section 4: Working together to improve attendance – Roles and Responsibilities**

Our approach to attendance has at the heart of it ‘what can we do to help you attend?’ It is built on motivating and inspiring the pupils to attend through positivity and a focus on improvement. Education in terms of attendance, to all stakeholders is crucial and this is an approach that ensures collaborative responsibility to attendance because we believe it is the most important factor in maximising the opportunity to learn. It is directly linked to the big aims of our curriculum in terms of taking responsibility and taking positive action. The system itself develops this collaborative responsibility and ensures that all those involved understand their part in this.

### **We expect all Pupils will:**

- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- Have the responsibility of knowing their own attendance and taking positive action in order to improve this throughout each academic year and across the full five years.

### **We expect that all Parents/Carers will:**

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities to ensure their child attends school.
- Ensure that their child arrives punctually and prepared for the school day.
- Contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- Inform the school by telephone on each day of absence to discuss with the attendance team.
- Contact the school whenever any problems occur that may keep the child away from school.
- Provide medical evidence when appropriate to support absence.
- Refrain from booking family holidays during school term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance.
- Arrange, wherever possible, for medical appointments to be made outside school hours. If this is unavoidable, then the child should be removed from school for the minimum amount of time possible.

### **We expect all Staff (including Governors) will:**

- Encourage good school attendance and provide a safe and welcoming learning environment.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and monitor all pupils’ attendance.
- Keep parents informed about attendance issues and report regularly to them on their child’s attendance record.
- Complete registers accurately at the beginning of each session.
- Provide appropriate and relevant rewards to individuals and groups in recognition of excellent or improving attendance.
- Monitor punctuality daily, rewarding and sanctioning where appropriate.

- Identify members of staff for parents to contact if they have concerns that their child may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- Consider any patterns that they notice in terms of attendance to their lessons and speak to pupils about the impact that this might have on learning

**We expect all Tutors will:**

- Contact the parents/carers after the 1<sup>st</sup> absence as directed by Head of Year, as soon as possible when there is unexplained or irregular absence.
- Respond to attendance data at form and individual student level.
- Follow the script for 'Attendance Conversations' each Monday (Tuesday if Monday is not possible).
- Choose one person each week to receive the positive phone call.
- Ensure form room displays are done and up to date.
- Be able to articulate the profile of attendance for their form.
- Always have a conversation with a pupil on their return from absence-this should be positive, welcome back type conversation.

**We expect all Heads of Year/Mentors will:**

- Ensure that attendance is high profile by updating notice boards and following the rewards/recognition process.
- Participate in Accountability meetings and complete all actions that are decided in these.
- Quality assure the attendance conversations had by tutors, for compliance and for quality
- Ensure that the stages of absence processes are used for all pupils in a judicious and thoughtful way.
- Work alongside Directors/AO in terms of the morning and between lesson punctuality systems.

**We expect Key Stage Directors will:**

- Support HOY in taking the actions decided at the accountability meetings.
- Have a full understanding of the narrative of attendance within each year group.
- Have a full understanding of the data, in terms of attendance, for key groups of pupils within each year group and report to/discuss with AHT.
- Work alongside Directors of Areas/HOY to manage the morning punctuality system.
- Work alongside Directors of Areas/HOY to implement the between lessons punctuality plan.
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**We expect all Directors of Area will:**

- Have a clear understanding of any patterns that emerge in attendance within their subject areas.
- Support HOY in the QA of Tutor responsibility.
- Support Key Stage Directors in managing the morning punctuality system.
- Support the pastoral team in the running of the between lessons punctuality

process.

- QA punctuality and have a clear understanding of this for your subjects and the teachers in these subjects.
- Provide punctuality (to school and between lessons) data to SLT.

### **We expect the Attendance Officer will:**

- Complete all first day response and respond to parental calls re: pupil absence
- Ensures all registers are done in a timely manner and are accurate. Follow the process for non-completion of registers in conjunction with AHT
- Chase up the pupils on a daily/lesson basis in terms of missing marks and truancy
- Ensure all registers and coding is up to date on a Friday to update and run the tracker, in preparation for sharing with tutors and HoY.
- Conduct accountability meetings and action decisions made at these in a timely fashion.
- Work alongside Directors/HOY in terms of the morning and between lesson punctuality systems .
- Work in partnership with other agencies, particularly the Education Welfare Service, to identify and support those pupils and families who have attendance problems.
- Have full access to the legal frame work surrounding attendance and be up to date with changes in government policies.
- Implement the resources of Penalty Notices, Fast Track, and court processes to maintain standards throughout the school.
- Implement the process of LEAP panels, to support and guide the pupils and parents through the legal process.

### **We expect the SLT Strategic Lead will:**

- Develop, implement and oversee strategic plan in a responsive way.
- Quality assure that all parties are completing their actions each week.
- Hold a weekly meeting with the attendance officer.
- Report attendance figures to SLT.
- Report punctuality figures to SLT.
- Discuss attendance with the leads for pupils in additional needs provision and for pupils with EAL.
- Train/Support other leaders in how to use the tracker to access data for groups of pupils, EAL, SEND, PP etc.
- Ensure all registers are taken accurately and promptly and challenge staff where this doesn't happen.

### **We expect the Headteacher will:**

- Evaluate and quality assure the systems and procedures in place to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide honest information to Governors around Attendance.
- Fulfill legal responsibility to ensure attendance is recorded accurately in the register and share the required information with DfE and local authorities.

## **Section 5: School Registration**

Formal registration is a legal requirement and takes place at Falinge Park High School at 8.30 am and 1.45 pm. Pupils must be at the school gate by 8.25am when the bell rings. The school gates officially close at 8.25am and pupils arriving after this time will be recorded as late for am registration.

The morning register closes at 9.00am. If a pupil arrives in school after the register has closed and an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming, the pupil will be recorded as “unauthorised absence” for the whole of the morning session.

All class teachers will take registers in each of their classes and will notify the Head of Year/ Attendance Officer if they believe a child is truanting.

Term time holidays (the Local Authority will issue instant Penalty Notices fines to parents of children who take unauthorised term time holidays of 5 days (10 unauthorised sessions or more). The fines are £60 for each parent of each child. The fine increases to £120 per parent per child if not paid within 3 weeks.

## **Section 6: a) Responding to non-attendance**

When a student does not attend, the school needs to respond effectively. Falinge Park High School has a range of intervention strategies to address irregular attendance. School action could include:

- If a telephone call is not received from home on the first day of absence, then school will make contact with the family either by text and telephone.
- A standard letter to bring to the attention of the parents that absence has been identified as a concern.
- An interview with the pupil to obtain the child’s perception of the problem.
- An attempt to engage with the parents to discuss the attendance difficulties.
- Home visits when communication with the parent cannot be made, or to discuss continued absence.
- Referral to the Education Welfare Officer who will undertake home visits and hold attendance panels in school.
- A letter warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice
- A Penalty Notice.
- Fast track to court.

## **Section 6: b) Responding to truancy**

When a student does not attend a lesson the following actions will take place:

- Teacher emails [attendance@falingepark.com](mailto:attendance@falingepark.com) to alert the attendance team that a pupil has not arrived at the lesson.
- Attendance Officer, Attendance Administration Support and/or Head of Year look for the pupil in the building.
- If not found, Attendance Officer or Attendance Administration Support texts parents/carers to let them know their child is not in their lesson. They will continue to look for the pupil and if not in their next lesson they will call parents/carers.
- Sanctions will be put in place for truancy.

## **Section 7: Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be categorised by the school (not the parent) as either Authorised or Unauthorised. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required.

Authorised absence is defined as absence as a result of:

- Illness for which an adequate explanation has been given
- Religious observation
- Medical or other evidence has been supplied.
- A pupil serving a fixed day exclusion
- Medical or dental appointment supported by an appointment card
- Exceptional circumstances, at the Headteacher's discretion
- Family holiday approved by the Headteacher (see holiday section below)

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave of absence has been given.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which are not properly explained
- Illness in the school year cannot be authorised without medical evidence.
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a morning mark
- Morning registers close at 9.00am, arrival after this time is unauthorised
- Shopping, looking after other children, waiting for a tradesman, service engineer or a delivery, or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- More than one day for Religious Observance\* (unless Eid falls twice in one academic year in that case a day will be allowed for each.) In instances of pupils being reported as ill the day following a Religious Observance, absences are not authorised without medical evidence being provided

### **Holidays in term time:**

Holidays in term time will not be authorised. Any holiday will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as Penalty Notice if the pupil's attendance rate falls into Persistent Absence category as a result of the absence. Term time absence request form See Appendix 2.

The decision to authorise/unauthorise absence lies with the Headteacher.

Penalty Notices Fines: In addition to the fines for term time holidays, the Local Authority will issue fines of £60 for each parent of each child who continues

to be absent from school for more than 10 days = 20 unauthorised sessions in a term, or a 12 week period. The fine increases to £120 per parent if not paid within 3 weeks.

\*We understand that families and faith leaders believe there should be 3 days authorised for Eid, however until the law changes nationally we cannot allow this.

## **Section 8: Persistent Absence and Severe Absence Definition**

Pupils with less than 90% overall attendance, i.e. missing more than 10% of school, whether authorised or unauthorised are classed as Persistent Absentees.

Pupils with less than 50% overall attendance are classed as Severely Absent.

Persistent and Severe absentees are heavily monitored by the school. Pupils and parents will be offered support and plans will be put in place to help improve their attendance. Specific information data for these pupils is reported to the Local Authority. Data is collected and produced regarding individual pupils, and every effort is made to prevent pupils falling into this category. Results show clear links between underachievement and persistent absenteeism in secondary age pupils. It is a priority for all stakeholders to ensure that pupils do not fall into or remain in this category.

## **Section 9: Punctuality**

Pupils should arrive at school by 8.25am and be in form rooms by 8.30am for official registration. Any pupil who is late will have a detention that day for 15 minutes at lunchtime. Failure to attend that detention, will result in an hour long detention with Directors of Area. Failure to attend this detention will result in a Senior Detention on a Friday after school with the headteacher.

Heads of Year will support lateness to school for a small number of pupils who have extenuating circumstances.

If your child is going to be late for school for a valid reason please ring school to inform, or provide your child with a note of explanation.

Pupils must sign in if they arrive after 9.00am.

If a pupil needs to leave school early they need to bring a note or appointment card to enable them to get permission to leave school.

## **Section 10: Equality Act 2010**

Falinge Park High School is committed to promoting an ethos that safeguards the dignity and well being of everyone and encourages practices that take into account the rights of individuals to be treated with dignity and respect. We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and victimisation directed at anyone because of their protected characteristic.

This Attendance Policy incorporates our commitment and actions to supporting the equality act. It demonstrates our commitment to addressing equality in our decision making and the delivery of education.

We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for pupils, staff and other users of our services so they can have equal access to all our school and its services.

This policy has been developed taking into account the Public Sector Equality Duty required by schools to ensure that no individual is discriminated against.

**Telephone numbers:**

<b>School reception and Head of Years</b>	01706 631246
<b>Attendance administration support</b> Miss S Malik	01706 631246 Ext 3011
<b>Attendance Officer</b>	01706 631246 Ext 3011
<b>Assistant Headteacher – Compelling Behaviour</b> Mrs L Pottinger	01706 631246 Ext 3003

## Appendix 1: Register Codes

Registers are legal documents. They are available for inspection by staff in school and by outside agencies. The correct codes for explaining absences **MUST** be used. They are as follows:

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

## SCHOOL REGISTERS – INFORMATION FOR TUTORS

1. Please be aware registers are legal documents and can be requested as evidence in cases of prosecution of parents in attendance court cases.
2. All teachers must take the am register by 8.30am. Please ensure that this is taken as the registers are printed off at during am registration in the case of fire/fire drill.
3. If pupils arrive late to lesson they should be marked as 2 with the drop down 'late' and minutes late added
4. The Inventory system will update pupil marks when they sign in/out.
5. If there is already a code for a pupil shown on the register this is because the Attendance Officer/ Head of Year have been informed of the reason for absence and this has been recorded on SIMS. There will usually be a note of explanation next to the mark.
6. All registers need to be taken immediately as the lesson has started as parents often ring up to check if their child is in school. If a pupil is missing from your lesson but was present in the previous lesson and you are concerned about them, email [attendance@falingepark.com](mailto:attendance@falingepark.com) and the Attendance Officer will check all possibilities regarding their absence.
7. Remember that Period 5 is PM registration and is a statutory requirement and should always be taken immediately.
8. Please check the Attendance Codes for information relating to reasons for absence. Teacher should only use codes: L, N, /, or numbers 0-5 on the register as the Attendance Officer will populate registers with all other codes.
9. All register codes are now used nationally and are issued by DfE.
10. A First Day Absence Response list is done every day. If a pupil is absent from your lesson the correct code to use is "N". If this is shown on the register for either am or pm registration, enquires into absence will be made by the HoY/Attendance Officer and notes put onto the register. For lessons in between it is the responsibility of the teacher to inform us.
11. WARNING. All staff are responsible and have a legal obligation to register pupils AM (Period 1) and PM (Period 5). If registers are not taken, staff will be required to complete missing registers in retrospect and be responsible for the accuracy of the data.
12. If for any reason the computer system is not working, it is the responsibility of that teacher to complete their own paper register, clearly marked with the date, period and group name and send it to the Attendance Officer. Safeguarding is a non-negotiable in school. Not taking a register is a breach of safeguarding procedures. In line with school strategy, the relevant members of staff MUST ensure that the registers are taken.
13. Teachers will receive a reminder for any registers not taken and as stated in the staff handbook the procedure below will be followed in cases of the necessity to repeat reminders.
14. In the case of a register not being taken at the correct time the Attendance Officer will produce a list of staff and pass to the Assistant Head for Compelling Behaviour (CB). Assistant Head (CB) will email staff and remind them it is a non-negotiable. Failure to complete a register

twice in a week or regularly in a number of weeks will be requested to attend a meeting with Assistant Head (CB) and record. Repeat offenders after meeting with the Assistant Head (CB) to meet with Deputy Head to be given a clear instruction and explanation of the next step being a Management Instruction from the Head teacher. Management instruction given if failure to take registers continues. Recorded on staff record

## Appendix 2 – Term time absence request form

### TERM TIME ABSENCE – THE LAW

From September 2013 the Government replaced the 2006 regulation that allowed schools to grant up to 10 days leave of absence at their discretion. This means that from September 2013, Headteachers have **NOT** been able to grant any leave of absence unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Please see overleaf for information regarding exceptional circumstances.

***There has been a period recently where the fines for unauthorised holidays in certain cases were suspended, however from 19/6/2017 the fines have been reinstated throughout schools in Rochdale.***

#### The cost of Penalty Notice fines:

A fine of £120 **EACH** parent, **EACH** child will be issued for 5 days or more of an unauthorised term time holiday, (the fine reduces to £60 each parent each child if paid within a 3 week period). Failure to pay the fine within 28 days may result in a **criminal conviction** and a fine issued by the Magistrate's Court.

Please complete if having read the above you still intend to take your child (children) out of school for a holiday.

Name of child/children: _____
Tutor Group(s): _____
Address: _____ _____
Date(s) of absence: From _____ To _____
Reason for absence: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Parent signature: _____ Tel contact: _____

**Please note:** We ask that you complete the information so we can update our registers. You will only receive a response if the Headteacher is satisfied that your circumstances are exceptional, otherwise the holiday will be recorded as unauthorised and the details passed to the Local Authority.

We do understand that if your child has an excellent attendance record it is very disappointing for an absence not to be approved. You may consider that a holiday will be educational, but your child will still miss out on the teaching that their peers will receive. Pupils returning from a term time holiday are unprepared for lessons which build on the teaching and learning they have missed. This could potentially make it more challenging for pupils to engage in learning and make progress. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

**Exceptional Circumstances does not include:**

- Cheaper holiday cost
- Visiting relatives
- Parents unable to take school holiday time off work (unless emergency services/forces employees with proof of enforced holiday period)

**Exceptional Circumstances may include:**

- A holiday organised by a charity due to a child/parent's illness - proof will be requested
- Holidays around a sporting/musical event where the child is taking part – proof will be requested

**EXTENDED HOLIDAYS**

If you take your child out of school on unauthorised leave of absence for 20 school days or more then he/she will be taken off our school roll. On your return you will need to contact the Local Authority to apply for a new school place. The Local Authority will inform you of schools that have vacancies in your child's year group.

If you wish to discuss this further please contact the school's attendance team on 01706 631246, ext. 3011.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Mrs L Pottinger



**Assistant Headteacher**

Miss J Allen



**Headteacher**