



Attendance & Truancy Policy

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1. Statement of intent

At Furze Platt Senior School we believe that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Students cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school regularly. The expectation is therefore that every student's attendance is above 95%. The majority of students achieve a high rate of attendance which will be formally recognised through the rewards system. The school will be vigilant in its approach to those with a low attendance record or whose absence is unauthorised.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our students.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- a) *to age, ability and aptitude and*
 - b) *to any special educational needs he/ she may have*
- Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".*

2. Legal framework

2.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2018) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children Missing Education'
- DfE (2019) 'Keeping children safe in education'

2.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

3. Definitions

3.1. The school defines "absence" as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

3.2. The school defines an "authorised absence" as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.

3.3. The school defines an "unauthorised absence" as:

- Parents/Carers keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no approved reason during the day.

3.4. The school defines "persistent absenteeism (PA)" as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the academic year for any reason.

4. Key roles & responsibilities

In order for the school's Attendance & Truancy Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the students at all times.

Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

4.1. Governors

- monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of the school;
- ensure that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation;
- have regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2019) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

4.2. Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) & other senior leaders

- adopt the whole policy;
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided;
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents when students have been absent;
- ensure that Heads of House have timetable periods for liaison and follow-up work with the Education Welfare Service and appropriate access to attendance data;

4.3. Attendance Officers

- to record all reasons for absences in the register;
- to chase unauthorised absences on day 1;
- to follow up any unexplained non-attendance/lateness;
- consult and liaise closely with the Education Welfare Service on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate students are identified and referred without delay;
- to work in close collaboration with the Education Welfare Service during their termly/register analysis;
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the Education Welfare Service.

4.4. Heads of House

- to monitor the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually by Tutors;
- to liaise with the Education Welfare Service regularly;
- to reinforce good practice at House assemblies;
- to share the Form Tutors concerns regarding the early identification of disaffection with the Education Welfare Officer;
- to ensure a regular and robust focus on attendance through assemblies, certificates and rewards.

4.5. Form Tutors

- to complete form registers accurately and punctually;
- to follow up any unexplained non-attendance/lateness;
- to inform the Head of House of concerns;
- to be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the Head of House.

4.6. Subject Teachers

- to keep an accurate subject register for every class;
- to follow up unexplained non-attendance;
- to impose sanction for lateness to lessons;
- to keep Head of Department informed of concerns.

4.7. Students

- attend school regularly and punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day;
- discuss attendance issues promptly with their Form Tutor, Head of House, SENCO, Attendance Officer or any other appropriate member of staff;
- bring a letter from home on their return to explain any absences.

4.8. Parents / carers

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- telephone the school on the first and subsequent day of any absence;
- after their child's absence send a letter of explanation on their return to school;
- ensure that they contact the school in advance whenever the child/children is/are unable to attend school for medical or other reasons;
- make every effort to arrange absence such as students' medical treatment, holiday etc outside school hours so that the disruption to their learning is kept to a minimum;
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

4.9. Sixth Form

Sixth Formers are expected to attend all lessons and independent study periods. As young adults, members of the Sixth Form are expected to take greater personal responsibility for ensuring their regular attendance at registration and at all time-tabled lessons. Unexpected absences will be followed up by Tutors and by the Head of Sixth Form, if necessary. Parents will be informed when attendance is a matter of concern. Parents are expected to contact the Sixth Form whenever their child is unable to attend.

5. Training

5.1. We recognise that early intervention can prevent bad behaviour. As such, members of staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk students as part of their induction and annual refresher training.

6. Absence procedures

- 6.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of any absence.
- 6.2. If there is a medical reason for the absence the parent/carer must provide medical evidence e.g. a hospital letter or GP appointment card.
- 6.3. Alternatively, parents may call into school and leave a message on the school absence line.
- 6.4. A telephone call will normally be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- 6.5. The school attendance officers will follow up any absences in order to:
 - Ascertain the reason for the absence.
 - Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
 - Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
 - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.
- 6.6. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to their child's Head of House or the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral).
- 6.7. The school will inform RBWM, on a termly basis, of the details of students who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.
- 6.8. Any student with less than 93% attendance in a term will be monitored by the Head of House and a proforma letter sent home. If a student's attendance drops below 85%, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed, who may request to speak to the student and may also request a formal meeting with the parents.
- 6.9. Where a student has not returned for 10 school days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the student from the admission register if the school and RBWM have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

7. Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

- 7.1. If they are persistently absent, students will be referred to the local Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement.
- 7.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the EWO has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

8. Fixed Penalty Notices

Parents may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice if their child is absent from school without permission. This can include parents who take their children on holiday during term time without getting authorisation from the school. The penalty is currently £60 for those who pay within 21 days, rising to £120 for those who pay within 28 days, per student, per parent.

9. Contact information

- 9.1. Parents must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 9.2. Parents are responsible for updating the school if the details change.
- 9.3. Parents must provide the school with more than one UK-based emergency contact number.

10. Lateness

- 10.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance, and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 10.2. The school day starts at 8:45 am; All students must be on site by 8:40am.
- 10.3. Registers are marked at 8:45am; students will receive a late mark if they are not in their form room by this time.
- 10.4. The register closes at 9:30am; students will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time. Any student who arrives after 9:10am Monday – Friday must sign in at the Student Reception.
- 10.5. Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as a late mark.

11. Truancy

- 11.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- 11.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of students, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- 11.3. All students are expected to be in their classes between 8:45am and 3:15pm (with the exceptions of break times), where the teacher will record attendance electronically.
- 11.4. Any student with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at reception and sign back in again on their return.
- 11.5. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a student might be truanting.
- 11.6. If truancy is suspected, the Attendance Officers / Pastoral Managers will be notified and they will contact the child's parents, in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.
- 11.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:
 - If repeat truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
 - A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term time and persistent late arrival at school.

12. Missing children

- 12.1. Students are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school.
- 12.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a student going missing during the school day:
 - The member of staff who has noticed the missing student will inform the safeguarding team immediately.

- All available members of safeguarding / pastoral staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the 'on call' member of staff.
 - The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - The library
 - The school grounds
 - Where a student cannot be found, the parents of the student will be notified immediately.
 - The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contacts provided.
 - If the parents have had no contact from the student, and the list has been exhausted, then the police will be contacted.
- 12.3. If the missing student has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 12.4. When the student has been located, a designated member of staff will care for and talk to the student to ensure they are safe and well.
- 12.5. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) will take the appropriate action to ensure the student understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 12.6. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the student has been located.
- 12.7. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 12.8. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

13. Term-time leave

- 13.1. Our aim is to prepare students for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 13.2. Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the student's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Requests must be directed to the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral).
- 13.3. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances, unless exceptional circumstances apply:
 - During Year 7 when a student is settling into the school
 - Immediately before and during assessment periods
 - When a student's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
 - Where a student's authorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason
- 13.4. Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. A non-exhaustive list of exceptional circumstances listed below as guidance to staff, parents and carers (evidence may be required in each case):
 - Wedding, funeral or other one off celebration - one day if local, two days if the funeral/wedding is further than 200 miles and three days if abroad.
 - Elite sporting activity (e.g. representing the region or nation, competing at a nationally or internally recognised event - one/two days as required.
 - Cadets and similar activities - up to five days.
 - Further education interviews.
 - Taking part in major Arts events, festivals, film and TV - up to five days (annually).
 - Auditions, Music and Dance exams - half or full day.
 - Visiting a school abroad for interview or exchange - up to five days.
 - Embassy visit for Visa issue - one day.
 - Graduation ceremony for an older sibling/parent - one day.
 - Religious celebrations - one day.
 - The death or terminal illness of a person in the immediate family - normally two or three days.

- Service personnel and other employees who cannot take leave outside term time at any point in the academic year.
 - In all circumstances, we encourage parents and carers to contact our attendance officers and pastoral team in advance for advice as to whether absence will be authorised.
- 13.5. If term time leave is not granted, taking a student out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions such as a penalty notice.

14. Religious observances

- 14.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.
- 14.2. Parents must inform the school at least 7 days in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.
- 14.3. The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong.

15. Appointments

- 15.1. As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible it is advisable to make appointments after 1:45pm in order to minimise the impact on missed education.
- 15.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school.
- 15.3. If the appointment requires the student to leave during the school day, the student must be signed out by somebody with Parental Responsibility.
- 15.4. Students must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

16. Young carers

- 16.1. The school understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school, as well as throughout their time at the school.
- 16.2. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

17. Exceptional circumstances

- 17.1. When absence is due to exceptional circumstances, the 'Y' code will be used on the attendance register. e.g in the event of school closure for adverse weather or teachers strikes.
- 17.2. Exceptional circumstances include when a student is unable to attend because:
- The school is fully or partially closed.
 - Transport provided by the school or LA is not available and the student's home is not within walking distance.
 - There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the student from attending.
 - The student is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

18. Rewards/Monitoring of Good Attendance

18.1. Each Form Tutor is to encourage full attendance for his/her tutees:

Strategies will include:

- following any period of absence, students should be welcomed back to school, and where necessary, the Head of House will carry out a reintegration interview;
- students with full 100% attendance for a term will be entered into a prize draw at the end of term;
- each Tutor/Head of House to read and use monthly attendance analysis data for their tutor group/House;

- each Head of House will meet fortnightly with the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) responsible for attendance to discuss attendance issues, which the Assistant Headteacher may refer to the Education Welfare Service;
- students where attendance is causing concern will be discussed with the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) and Attendance Officers, who will advise on the most appropriate course of action.

19. Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform the Headteacher/Head of House as soon as possible in writing. A student will not be removed from the school's roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the student will be leaving this school and starting at the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known.

The student's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

20. Monitoring & Review

20.1. This policy is reviewed every three years by the Deputy Headteacher & Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)

20.2. The scheduled review date for this policy is November 2022.