

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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### 1. PRINCIPLES:

**1.1** Fairfax is committed to maximising the attendance of every student during their education at the Academy. Students with frequent absences are being denied equality of opportunity.

**1.2** Attendance is inextricably linked to success in all aspects of school life, including examinations, and regular school attendance is vital if students are to benefit from the experiences which the school offers them. Employers and other reference seekers value attendance and punctuality highly as an indicator of reliability.

**1.3** Regular school attendance is based on a strong and supportive partnership between the school, parents, Fairfax Academy Associates and other outside agencies, such as the Central School Attendance and Welfare Service Ltd, Behaviour Support Service and Social Services.

**1.4** Parents and Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children always attend school unless there is a genuine reason for them being unable to do this and that they have informed the school. As of 2014, a child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach seventeen. From September 2015, they will be required to continue in education or training until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### 2. AIMS:

**2.1** To aim for the majority of students to achieve 95% attendance and to continue to improve towards the 100% attendance mark.

**2.2** To ensure all students to be punctual to school and to lessons in order to prepare them appropriately for the world of work.

**2.3** To ensure that students are not taken out of school for term-time family holidays. Holiday requests will not be authorised.

**2.4** To work closely with parents in a supportive way in order to ensure maximum attendance.

### **3. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY:**

**3.1** By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive full-time education. Parents are responsible for ensuring this happens by registering their child at a school or making other arrangements to provide for an effective education. If a child is registered at a school, only that school is able to give permission for the child to be absent.

**3.2** Failure to send a child to school could mean that the LA (Local Authority) takes legal action in the form of an education supervision order and/or a fine.

### **4. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

**4.1 Attendance Line Manager:** To oversee and monitor whole-school attendance and punctuality along with Attendance Officer. To report to Leadership Team and Academy Associates and to ensure liaison with outside agencies such as CSAWS, Social Services and the Behaviour Support Service.

**4.2 Head of Year/Assistant Head of Year:** To co-ordinate their team of tutors regarding attendance issues. To reinforce good practice at Tutor Development Training sessions and in Year assemblies. To contact parents if House Tutor is unable to establish reasons for absence. To work with Attendance Officer to initiate referrals to the Attendance and Welfare Officer from CSAWS and to be actively involved in referral processes.

**4.3 House Tutor:** To ensure accurate marking of registers and to ensure that attendance and punctuality are regular features of tutorial time. To ensure that planned absences are communicated to the Attendance

Officer. To carefully monitor attendance patterns and report any concerns to the appropriate Head of Year/Attendance Officer. To respond to weekly feedback on student lateness by discussing concerns with them and to issue C3 when appropriate.

**4.4 Teacher:** To ensure electronic lesson registers are completed every lesson and in the case of ICT breakdown, to complete a paper register for the Attendance Officer. All period 1 registers must be completed by 9:10 am so that the Attendance Officer can initiate the 'Kids Safe' procedure. A register is to be completed within the first 15 minutes of all lessons.

**4.5 Student:** To attend regularly and punctually. To sign in at the Attendance Office if arriving in school late after the registers have closed and to produce a note to explain absences and lateness.

**4.6 Parent/Carer:** To ensure that their children attend school regularly. To inform the school at the earliest possible time of the reason for and the expected length of any absence. To respond promptly to an absence call from the school. To ensure that no holidays are organised in term-time.

**4.7 Attendance Officer/Team:** To ensure computerised registers are processed and any absences and lateness's identified. To use Keep Kids Safe to inform parents immediately of any absence. To inform staff and students that registers close at 8:55 am. To work closely with Heads of Year in relation to students whose attendance is causing concern. To produce a breakdown of attendance and percentage attendance for each year group half-termly for an attendance focus in year assemblies. To liaise regularly with line manager and run all Low Attendance and Spotlight letters past them prior to them being sent out, meet with Attendance and Welfare Officer from CSAWS weekly. To process and implement new systems of work in order to improve attendance. To communicate with parents as and when necessary.

**4.8 Fairfax Academy Associate:** To maintain an interest in attendance statistics and encourage target setting for improvement. To review the

success of the attendance policy.

**4.9 School uses Central School Attendance and Welfare Service Ltd (CSAWS)** to support the school with the processes associated with children's attendance at school. The Academy employs CSAWS to provide the legal monitoring services and support that will help reduce the number of persistent absent pupils and improve whole school attendance.

## **5. PROCEDURES FOR REGISTRATION:**

**5.1** The accurate and prompt recording of student attendance is essential and this information is required by the DFE (Department for Education)

**5.2** Attendance data is a module on SIMS, the internal school network, and the Attendance Officer monitors this.

**5.3** Parents are asked to inform the school by 8:35am (by email or by telephone) if their child is going to be absent that day and on subsequent days of absence. If the absence is going to be lengthy, they are asked to inform the Attendance Officer by letter.

**5.4** Parents are required to inform the Attendance Officer of medical and dental appointments in advance by using the same system. We ask parents to try to ensure that appointments are made outside of school hours, wherever possible. Parents are also asked to ensure that, if appointments in school time are unavoidable, students attend school prior to the appointment and are returned to school afterwards.

**5.5** Students who are late to school for any reason or who have to leave early are required to sign in or out in the Attendance Office.

**5.6** If students are not recorded as present, have not signed in or if the school has not heard from parents/carers, an automated text or telephone call will be sent as early as 9:30am.

**5.7** If the Academy receives no reason for a student's absence, the

Attendance Officer will write to the parents of students who are absent asking for an explanation. If no response is received, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

**5.8** Students who arrive late to school between the times of 8:35 am and 8:55 am will be met by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, coded with a late mark ('L') and given a consequence.

**5.9** Students that arrive to school after 8:55 am with no reasonable explanation will receive a 'U' code (unauthorised late when AM registration closes) for that am registration mark. Once a student receives 20 'U' codes, legal action may be started by the Attendance and Welfare Officer.

## **6. ABSENCE**

**6.1** If staff are concerned about a child's absence or there is no response to text messages, they will attempt to make contact by telephone calls to parents, other emergency contacts, home visits, and referrals to the CSAWS Attendance and Welfare Officer and to the police for a safe and well check.

**It is imperative that up-to-date contact numbers and details are provided to school**

**6.2** Not all illness requires an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, ear aches we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school they should follow the above absence process.

**6.3** It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested

**6.4** The Academy will challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

In fact, it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

**School may request medical evidence in the following scenarios:**

- Attendance is less than 92%
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support

**7. PERSISTENT LATENESS:** It is the responsibility of the school to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging punctuality concerns.

**7.1** In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of lateness (late between the times of 8:35 – 8:55) the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers.

**7.2** The Head of Year may place a student on an 'Attendance and Punctuality Report' to monitor their punctuality to AM and PM registrations.

**7.3** Due to possible legal action, after 20 'U' codes the following procedures are put in place to resolve the problem:

- 5 U codes = a letter sent home and meeting with student, parents/carers and Head of Year
- 10 U codes = a meeting with student, parents/carers and Assistant Head Teacher.
- 15 U codes = a meeting with the student, parent/carers and the Head of Academy or Fairfax Academy Associates

- 20 U codes = CSAWS will instigate legal proceedings where appropriate.

**8. PERSISTENT ABSENCE SPOTLIGHT:** It is the responsibility of the school to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns.

**8.1** In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers. If this is unsuccessful, the Academy will seek advice from other external agencies and involve the Attendance Officer and the Attendance and Welfare Officer from CSAWS.

**8.2** Poor attendance is investigated on a daily basis by the Attendance Officer who communicates areas of concern to, Heads of Year, the school's Police Liaison Officer and the Attendance and Welfare Officer from CSAWS.

**8.3** A letter of concern is sent to parents if attendance falls below 92% once names have been authorised by the Attendance Line Manger. The letter will outline the student's percentage attendance and will state that all absences will be considered as unauthorised without proof of attendance at a medical establishment. It will also ask if there are any underlying medical reasons or emotional reasons (e.g. close family bereavement) accounting for the absences – support systems can then be put into place. Parents of students who have a pattern of persistent lateness to school will also receive a letter of concern. After this any further lateness may result in an unauthorised absence mark.

**8.4** Further unauthorised absence will result in a meeting with CSAWS Attendance and Welfare Officer, the Attendance Officer, parent/carer and the student. Names of these students will be agreed by the Attendance Line Manger. If the situation shows no improvement, the Attendance and Welfare Officer may instigate legal proceedings where appropriate or in the case of a Sixth Form student further unauthorised absence will result in a meeting with the Director of Sixth Form, the parent/carer and the student. If the situation shows no improvement appropriate disciplinary proceedings will be followed.

## **9. LEAVE DURING TERM TIME (PUPILS)**

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013* have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

**9.1** The Attendance Officer will send a 'Leave in Term Time' letter to all parents/carers at the start of every academic year to inform them that the Headteacher is unable to authorise leave during term time except where there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/Carers are informed of the legal implications that could occur if leave without authorisation takes place.

**9.2** Parents must complete an 'Exceptional Leave in Term Time Request Form' if they are considering taking their child out of school for a period of leave. These forms can be collected from Reception and must be returned to the Attendance Officer.

**9.3** The Attendance Officer will communicate with the CSAWS's Attendance and Welfare Officer if leave has been taken without authorisation. Contact with parents/carers will be made via letters, phone calls and home visits as appropriate.

**9.4** Any legal action required will be taken by the Education Legal Intervention Team.

## **10. TRUANCY:**

**10.1** Fairfax School monitor attendance to each lesson period of the school day using the registers, in order to ensure all pupils are safe in school and whereabouts known. If a pupil does not present to scheduled lessons/activities, the Attendance Officer is informed and



staff alerted to find missing pupils. If pupils cannot be located and are suspected of leaving school premises, parents will be informed. Heads of Year will investigate the whereabouts during the truanting period and inform the Attendance Officer and the parents/carers of where the student was.

**10.2** The first time a student is caught truanting from school and/or lessons, the parent/carer will be informed by telephone and/or letter and the student will be placed on attendance report. Regular spot checks will be carried out to check on the student's future attendance. Students will receive a C3 for their first offence.

**10.3** If a student is discovered to be truanting for a second time, the above sanctions will apply and parents/carers invited into school to attend an interview with the student's Head of Year. Students will receive a C4 isolation for their second offence.

In exceptional circumstances where a student is discovered truanting for a third time, parents and students will be invited to attend a meeting with the Assistant Headteacher and students and parents will be required to agree and sign a contract of attendance. A Fairfax Academy Associates Disciplinary Interview may take place if required.

## **11. ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROVIDERS**

**11.1** On rare occasions, a small number of pupils may be accessing an alternative education provider agreed by the school for all or part of their timetable. In this instance the pupil remains on roll at Fairfax School.

**11.2** Attendance to approved alternative providers is monitored and reflected on school registers. The responsibility of ensuring pupils are safeguarded and receiving appropriate education remains with Fairfax School.

## **12. ATTENDANCE, SAFEGUARDING AND CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION**

**12.1** A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

**12.2** All schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12).

This attendance policy is part of a broader suite of safeguarding policies including the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

**13. SIXTH FORM ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES:** It is the responsibility of the school to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns.

**13.1** In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers. If this is unsuccessful, the school will follow the procedures highlighted in 13.2 – 13.4.

**13.2** Poor attendance is investigated on a daily basis by the Sixth Form Attendance Coordinator who communicates areas of concern to the Director of Sixth Form, and if required to the school's Police Liaison Officer and the Education Welfare Officer.

**13.3** A letter of concern is sent to parents if attendance falls below what is expected. The letter will outline the student's percentage attendance and will state that all absences will be considered as unauthorised without proof of attendance at a medical establishment. It will also ask if there are any underlying medical reasons or emotional reasons (e.g. close family bereavement) accounting for the absences –

support systems can then be put into place. Parents of students who have persistent lateness to school will also receive a letter of concern and any further lateness will result in an unauthorised absence mark.

**13.4** Further unauthorised absence will result in a meeting with the Assistant Head of Sixth Form/Director of Sixth Form, parent/carer and the student. If the situation shows no improvement, the Director of Sixth Form will call for a second meeting. If no improvements are displayed after the second meeting, the parents/carers and student could be called to either see a Deputy Head Teacher/Head of the Academy or Fairfax Academy Associates.

**14. REWARDS:** At Fairfax, good and improved attendance is celebrated and rewarded. Students are presented with letters for 100% attendance every term and for improved attendance from the previous year. In addition, My Sticker rewards points are awarded to these students where they can activate the points onto their My Stickers account.

**15. COMMUNICATION:** The Attendance Officer encourages regular communication and good rapport with parents and as such, they are asked to contact him or her either by telephone or by email.