



# **Attendance Policy**

## **Fairfax Academy**

### **Part of Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust**

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**PRINCIPLES:**

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.

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.

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.

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.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. This policy sets out how school staff will work with pupils, parents, and partners to promote, encourage and support regular attendance at school and remove any barriers to attendance.

**AIMS:**

- To set clear expectations and aspirations that all pupils have a high standard of school attendance and punctuality.
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance
- To make attendance a priority for everyone.
- To ensure there is a clear process to identify and address emerging attendance concerns.
- To work effectively with parents, pupils, and partners through building trusted relationships to work together to remove barriers to attendance.

To achieve these aims for our pupils, we are committed to the following:

- a welcoming, stimulating, and safe learning environment.
- for all staff to feel happy to come to school to work with pupils, developing them to their full potential.
- listen to parents and pupils to understand barriers to attendance.
- build trusted relationships with parents and pupils where attendance concerns can be discussed and understood.
- high expectations of our pupils and all staff.
- a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum.
- recognise and celebrate achievements in all areas of school life.
- equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life.
- high quality teaching using a variety of teaching strategies.
- a range of resources that are effectively used to support and challenge learning.
- provide experiences, which will develop our pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural understanding.
- support, guidance, and training for all those who teach and work with our children.
- foster and maintain links with our wider community.

### **Legislative Framework**

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis.

Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education that is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have.

Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children receive education. Estranged parents with whom the child has had regular contact may be prosecuted as well as the day-to-day carer. Each situation must be dealt with on an individual basis, always remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern. The term 'parent' also includes those who are not a natural parent but have parental responsibility for the child as defined by the Children Act 1989 or who have care of the child as defined by the Education Act 199

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The school has an Attendance Champion, a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues.

Members of school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have responsibility for attendance issues in school.

**If you have a concern about your child's attendance your first point of contact is our Attendance Officer Jo O'Connor.**

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

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

absences and lateness.

**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.

**Attendance Officer/Team:** To ensure computerised registers are processed and any absences and lateness 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 FastTrack 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.

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

**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.

## Procedures

**Our school procedures follow the expectations set out by the Department for Education in the guidance Working Together to improve school attendance (September 2022).**

Our procedures are based around the principles and stages of:

- Preventing poor attendance
- Early intervention and Early Help to address early patterns of poor attendance and agree ways to improve.
- Targeted interventions (including Early Help and Formal interventions) for those children who are persistently absent or severely absent.
- Understanding barriers to individuals' attendance and agree individual plans for children with specific needs.
- Formal Statutory Interventions where support has not been effective or engaged with.

98-100%	<p><b>Excellent. Accessing all learning opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rewards and incentives</li> <li>Termly letter sent home</li> <li>Weekly text messages for 100% attendance</li> </ul>
96-97%	<p><b>Good. Very few learning opportunities missed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Termly letter sent home</li> </ul>
94-95%	<p><b>Risk of Under achievement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter 1 sent identifying concerns</li> </ul>
93-92%	<p><b>•Risk of Under achievement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter 2 sent expressing further concerns</li> <li>•Tutor/class teacher contact to explore any barriers to attendance</li> </ul>
92-90%	<p><b>•Severe risk of underachievement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Meeting offered with CSAWS and school to discuss understand reasons for absence concerns and agree an support plan to secure attendance</li> <li>•Medical evidence requested if appropriate</li> <li>•Early Help explored and offered</li> <li>•Home visit if meeting not attended</li> <li>•Signposting to relevant support agencies</li> <li>•Legal action considered</li> </ul>
89% or below	<p><b>•Extreme risk of underachievement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Pupil is persistently absent</li> <li>•Referred to CSAWS for interventions including home visits Fastrack process if number of unauthorised absences</li> <li>•Early help explored</li> <li>•Formal Attendance Review Meeting if 10 or more unauthorised absences</li> </ul>

Where attendance has deteriorated rapidly, there are concerning patterns of absence, unauthorised absences, or parents have not responded to concerns raised, a referral may be made straight to CSAWS. The Birmingham attendance process for addressing attendance concerns and where appropriate legal action including the issue of penalty notices will be followed.

### School Day and Punctuality

It is important that pupils are punctual so that they do not miss out on the beginning of each school day. Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.

If a pupil arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer. Below is a graph showing how being late to school every day over a school year adds up to lost learning time.



### **PERSISTENT LATENESS:**

It is the responsibility of the school to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging punctuality concerns.

In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of lateness (late between the times of 8:30 – 8:55) the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers. The Head of Year may place a student on an 'Attendance and Punctuality Report' to monitor their punctuality to AM and PM registrations.

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 = Headteacher will instigate legal proceedings where appropriate. Using the FastTrack process.

### **Absence**

If a child is absent from school parents should contact the school on the first day of absence by 8.30am, to inform the school of the reason for absence. Parents are expected to maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

At 9.30am school registers are checked for any absences where there has been no contact by parents and reason given.

School staff will send text messages/email to parents to ascertain a reason for the child's absence from school and telephone all available contacts.

If staff are concerned about a child's absence or there is no response, they will follow the process in detailed in Appendix 1. This includes telephone calls to parents, other emergency contacts, home visits, referrals to the CSAWS Attendance and Welfare Officer and to the police for a visit to see the child.

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.

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.

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.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

**It is imperative that up-to-date contact numbers and details are provided to the school. Schools are required to hold more than one emergency contact per child (KCSIE 2023) Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.**

### **Illness**

Not all illnesses require 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.

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. Each absence will be assessed by the school, and they will decide if medical evidence is required. 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. This evidence should be provided to the school within a 2-week period.

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:**

- Child is absent and there are frequent odd days of absences due to reported illness.
- Child is absent and the same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.
- Child is absent and attendance is below expected levels and there is a concerning pattern of absence/reasons for absence.
- Where there is a medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support

### **Medical appointments**

Parents should avoid making routine medical appointments and dental appointments during the school day. In the majority of cases, appointments can be made outside of the school day/during the school holidays.

Where appointments must be taken during the school day, only the time for the appointment and travel to and from will be classed as an authorised absence. Pupils are expected to return to school for the remainder of the day/attend school prior to the appointment.

**Other Reasons for Absences:**

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school on each occasion. Notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or childminding.

**Religious Observance**

School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends, and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. However, parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent. Religious bodies maybe contacted to verify these occasions.

**Traveller Absence**

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must advise school of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and inform the school regarding proposed return dates

School will authorise absence of Traveller children if their parent(s) are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to and has given indication that they intend to return.

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

### **Reintegration of Long-Term Absentees**

Absence can significantly interrupt the continuity of students learning, and positive strategies should be employed to minimise such effects.

#### Key Principles

- We should always keep in touch with a student/and their family during a long absence.
- We should always make sure the pupil is welcomed back.
- A clear plan should be discussed and agreed with the parent/carer, pupil and school. Allowing for regular reviews dates.

The school will consider a phased return where appropriate. This needs to be considered carefully and includes seeking expert advice from relevant professionals and co ordinating a multi-agency meeting. Consideration needs to be given to any special needs the pupil may have and appropriate support identified. Consideration must be given to a package of support which may include providing a mentor (staff member/student)

Class Teachers should ensure that the pupil feels welcomed back to school in an appropriate way and take any necessary steps to support their re-integration.

### **PERSISTENT ABSENCE FAST TRACK:**

It is the responsibility of the school to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns.

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.

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.

**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.

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.

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.

Contact with parents/carers will be made via letters, phone calls and home visits as appropriate.

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

**TRUANCY:**

Fairfax School monitor attendance at each lesson period of the school day using the registers, in order to ensure all pupils are safe in school and their whereabouts known. If a pupil does not present at 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.

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.

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.

### **Alternative Education Providers**

Attendance to approved alternative providers is monitored. When Pupil are Dual registered at another school or alternative provider their attendance will be recorded in the register as a D code (on days they are required to attend the other school/provision). The other school/provision will record the attendance of absence. For children who are Educated Off site but not dual registered their attendance will be recorded in our school register as a B code if they are confirmed present or the appropriate absent code if absent. The responsibility of ensuring pupils are safeguarded and receiving appropriate education remains with our School.

### **Registers**

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations

Every half day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence can be given only when the head teacher has either approved in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the head teacher [see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No.2006/1751) – reg 7(1)].

There are procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within two weeks. School complies with and uses the DFE Compulsory National Attendance Codes to categorise absence (Appendix 2).

### **Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Absent from Education**

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

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).

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll on the limited grounds set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm. Schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties

In September 2016, the Department for Education updated the [statutory guidance](#) to reflect the 2016 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations.

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the 2006 regulations (as amended).

Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the CME officer, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).

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

### **Use of Attendance Data**

All schools must provide their attendance data to the DFE, most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

We collect, use and store attendance information about our pupils and may receive information about you from your previous school. The information we keep regarding attendance includes name, contact details, attendance records, late records and any relevant medical information.

Where there is cause for concern, this information is shared with CSAWS during regular attendance meetings held at school. CSAWS then follow up attendance concerns with parents and carers on school's behalf.

We will also share attendance information with the Local Authority Attendance Support Team at least termly in line with Working together to improve attendance (2022)

### **Sixth Form**

#### **SIXTH FORM ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES:**

It is the responsibility of the school to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns.

Parents are asked to inform the school by 8:30am (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.

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.

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 below:

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.

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 absences will be assessed on each occasion and may 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.

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

#### **SIXTH FORM SIGNING OUT FOR LUNCH AND PERIOD 5 PRIVATE STUDY**

Sixth Form students are allowed leave the school site at lunch time but must sign out electronically using their student card. On return back to the academy, students must sign back in when arriving back for period 5.

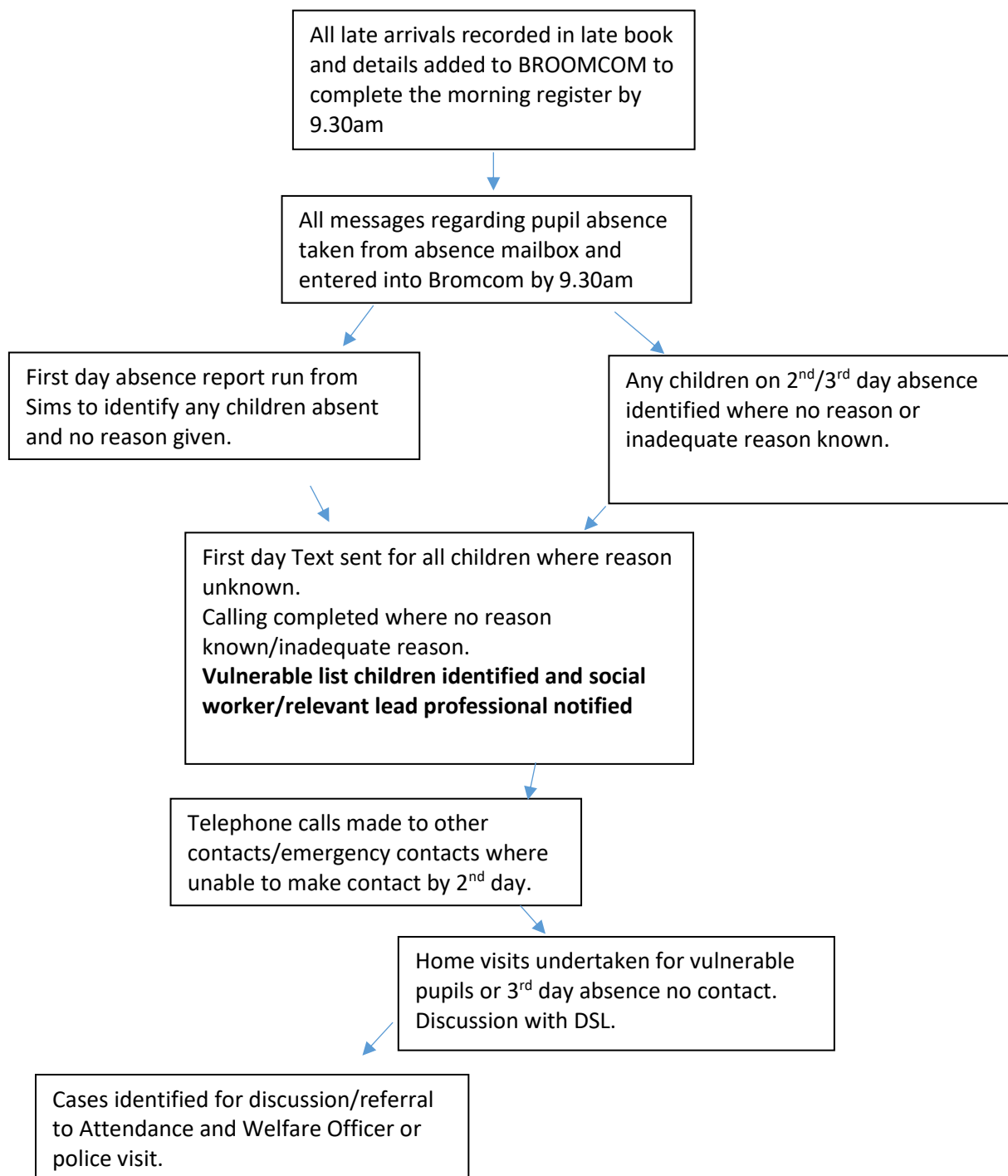
In the event that a private study occurs during period 5, the student can choose to use this time to study from home. Students must have this pre agreed with the Sixth Form team and should sign out electronically using their student card.



**WHOLE SCHOOL 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, we will rewards students with entry in Amazon Gift Card prize draws.



## Appendix 1 School Absence Procedure



## Appendix 2- ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	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>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<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>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	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