Attendance Policy

Fairisle Infant and Nursery School



Last Reviewed: January 2025 Next Review: January 2027

SIGNATURE STAMP

This policy was approved and adopted by the Governing Body at their meeting on: : 12/02/2025

Signed:

Rick Allan Chair of Governors

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance for each pupil to be the best they can be and to reach their potential
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Promoting effective partnerships with external services

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on <u>Working Together To</u> <u>Improve School Attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)</u> and <u>School Attendance Parental Responsibility</u> <u>Measures</u>. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
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3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers

Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including

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 \circ Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority

• Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources

Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs

Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most

Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and enallenge

Working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance

Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs

Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers

• The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, An end analysing attendance data

Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The link governor for attendance is Lucy Bannister.

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3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers along with the SENDCO

Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHCP) plan ras falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs along with the SENDCO

Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels

Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:

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• Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times

• Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days

 \circ $\,$ Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'Senior Attendance Champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance sues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader / the 'Senior Attendance Champion' responsible for attendance is Juliette Owens and can be contacted via 02380 731199

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Making contact with families where no reason has been provided for non-attendance
- Writing emails and letters to families
- Informing class teachers and senior leaders on our school system
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Officer is Ann Stephens and can be contacted via 02380 731199

3.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via SIMS, daily in the morning and again in the afternoon. They will also share the impact of poor attendance and punctuality with parents where appropriate. Class teachers will also keep the AO updated on any relevant information that they are aware of at any time that may affect

school attendance. They will carry out welfare phone calls as appropriate and hold informal meetings throughout the year to discuss the barriers of school attendance if relevant and update the AO and Cpoms.

3.6 School Admin staff

School Admin staff will:

Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record a detailed reason on the school system

Transfer calls from parents/carers to the relevant member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents/carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends everyday on time between 8.45am and 9am

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Ann Stephens or Juliette Owens via phone 02380 731199 or email info@fairisle-inf.co.uk

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

Present

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

- The amended entry
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- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
 - The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the end of the school year that it relates to.

Pupils must arrive in school on time between 8:45 and 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9:30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1:30pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff: 02380 731199 or emailing info@fairisle-inf.co.uk (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorized, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity or frequency of illness.

Where the absence is frequent, longer than 3-5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

4.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and can provide proof of the appointment.

Parents/carers should request a leave of absence by completing a form, which is available from the school office or from our website.

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

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

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)

The school will ask children and parents/carers if appropriate for a reason for lateness. The school will rite to/telephone parents where punctuality is a matter of concern. Support will be offered if required depending on outcomes of these conversations. If circumstances allow, a penalty notice will be issued for persistent lateness. The impact of lateness will be made clear to parents where opportunities arise, e.g. parents' evening, annual reports to parents.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the leason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit, of if there are sufficiently serious concerns contact the police or CRS (Children's Services)

Identify whether the absence is approved or not

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent

Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance

Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the Recessary referrals

Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate]

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels, for example via letters home, reports to parents, conversations with parents and any other suitable opportunities.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the <u>2024 school attendance regulations</u>. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

We do not define 'exceptional circumstances', this is dependent on facts and there is no such thing as a 'precedent'.

Each application for term-time absence is considered individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. It is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least three weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence may include:

Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the Religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Parents travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been fnade)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school

Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)

Attending provision arranged by the local authority

If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher, local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of fnauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution

Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty fotice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with

A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis

- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school recognises that in many cases children want to attend school and on time, but are prevented from doing so by family circumstances. This therefore makes reward systems complex to deliver, including 'collective rewards'. Taking all this into consideration the school has chosen to do the following:

The school has a number of systems to encourage and promote good attendance, such as weekly rear group assembly where attendance is discussed and the highest class percentage wins SAM trophy for the week.

There are opportunities to meet SAM (our School Attendance Matters) mascot and 'Be In It To Win

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The school may use individualised reward schemes, such as stickers and certificates with specific children to incentivise and celebrate attendance.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHCP) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local

authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Appropriate transition back into school will be supported by class adults and/or an ELSA. Some pupils may require a phased return guided by medical professional advice.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

Monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level, year group and cohort level.

Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate
 patterns of persistent or severe absence to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis

Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)

Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including the special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leader)

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Reeping Children Safe in Education

Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent to

- Discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
- Explain the help that is available
- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions

Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence

- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
- Write letters to parents including minutes or outcomes from meetings

9. Monitoring arrangements

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

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
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Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario			
1	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration			
١	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration			
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed			
Attending a place other than the school					
к	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority			
v	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school			
Р	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school			
w	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement			
в	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience			
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered			
	Absent – leave of absence				
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school			
М	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment			
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment			

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination		
x	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend		
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable		
с	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances		
Absent – other authorised reasons				
т	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes		
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance		
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)		
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made		
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause				
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school		
¥1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available		
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency		
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open		

¥4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)		
Υ5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: In police detention Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or Detained under a sentence of detention		
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law		
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes		
Absent – unauthorised absence				
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school		
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes		
ο	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence		
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session		
Administrative codes				
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered		
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays		