



FRED LONGWORTH
HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Policy & Procedures

November 2017

Attendance Policy

Rationale

Fred Longworth High School (FLHS) is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all students and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Our school recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our attendance policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome and we will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Legal Framework

- Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age (5 – 16) receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.
- Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, one at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
- The register must record whether the student was:
 - Present
 - Absent
 - Present at approved educational activity, or
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Categorising absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

- Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. In the event a child's attendance is a cause for concern, school has the right to request parents to provide medical evidence i.e. medical card or prescription to support these absences.
- Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers. In the failure of this procedure and following three days of absence and no communication a welfare check will be undertaken by a member of the Attendance Team.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

1. Illness in most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill is acceptable. Parents will be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences/low attendances. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.
2. Medical/Dental appointments Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Students should show the appointment card to school.
3. Other Authorised Circumstances This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a re-integration package.
4. Excluded (Alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's Head of Year will make arrangements for work to be sent home. Where alternative provision is made, the student will be marked as present.
5. Study Leave Study leave may be granted for Year 11 students approaching GCSE examinations. The school will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.
6. Family Holidays and extended leave Amendments to the Education (pupil registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, school are to remove references to family holiday and extended leave and also remove statutory threshold of ten school days.
We strongly discourage parents from requesting time for holidays in term time and requests will, in the vast majority of cases, be refused. Absence of this nature will be recorded as unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances to support this. Parents wishing to take their child on holiday during term time must send written notice to inform the Head teacher before holiday arrangements are made and at least two weeks prior

to the proposed holiday. If the permission to take leave is not granted the student still goes on holiday, the absence will be **unauthorised**.

Any unauthorised absence will be considered for an Education Penalty Notice (Fine).

Students who go on unauthorised holidays during term time will not usually be allowed to attend Rewards trips/Leavers' Ball (at the discretion of the HOY).

7. Approved Extra-Curricular Activities Where a student requests absence during school time for an extra-curricular activity, all applications for absence will be considered at the discretion of the Attendance Officer/Head of Year. On occasions this may be referred to the Head teacher/Pastoral Deputy Head. A student's previous attendance level and absence record from school will be taken into account in these situations.

8. Religious Observation FLHS 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. One day's absence should accommodate this request but no more than 3 per year.

9. Punctuality Arriving late after the register is closed. All students must arrive to school in time for registration which commences at 8.35am. The first bell will sound at 8.34am with a second bell at 8.35am – at this point all students should be outside/in their designated form room. If a student arrives after this time without a justifiable cause, they will be recorded with a 'L' late mark. Students arriving after 9:05am will be recorded with a 'U' unauthorised absence unless a sufficient reason for lateness is given.

The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause.

Unauthorised absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

The Attendance Officer and Heads of Year will investigate absence where there is a trend of absences, for example if three or more 'collapsed timetable' days are missed, and in these circumstances the school may decide to unauthorise such absences.

Two occasions of lateness in 1 week will be dealt with by the HOY and the student will receive a detention.

Persistent lateness is closely monitored and Education Penalty Fines will be issued if needed.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age

- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Transfer between schools
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with the Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student

FLHS will follow Wigan Council Safeguarding Children Missing Education Protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown.

Roles and Responsibilities

FLHS believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, students and the wider school community. As such, the Governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issue through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The Leadership Team

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents
- Form positive relationships with students and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and are adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education, as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body
- Ensure the systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- Support Heads of Year and the Attendance Officer with decisions relating to unauthorised absence

Head of Year, Attendance Team

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents
- Form positive relationships with students and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions

- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families, through the Early Help process
- Assist the Attendance Officer in decisions regarding Unauthorised absence
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

Request that Parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and their educational development. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Write to school with sufficient notice to request an authorised absence
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.
- Ensure that all school days are viewed as important and support the school with this area

Attendance Data

Student's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

If attendance falls below 95.99% contact is made with home outlining the importance of good attendance and offering support. If attendance does not improve, the thresholds and actions outlined below are followed:

95.99%

- HOY will firstly establish the reason for student absence by liaising with the Attendance Team and may refer to other agencies
- HOY will contact parent/carer and raise concern
- HOY will meet with the student
- Attendance Officer/Attendance & PP Coordinator (Attendance Team) to continue to monitor attendance

93%

- The Attendance Team will send out an initial letter to parents
- Speak to students on a daily basis / mentor / support
- Liaise with parents and request medical evidence where possible
- Carry out home visits to confirm illness – these may be made together with the HOY
- Place students on a report card to monitor and improve Attendance & Punctuality

90%

- Attendance team will contact parent/student and invite into school to complete an attendance contract. Absences will be analysed and referred through to Legal Enforcement Team/ Gateway when appropriate.

From September 2015 a pupil will be considered to be persistently absent (PA) if he/she is away 10% of school sessions in an academic year i.e. 90% and below attendance.

The school's Attendance Officer will involve Wigan Council's Legal Enforcement Team when prosecution is necessary.

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

FLHS will share attendance data with the Department for Education, and the local authority as required.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

% ATTENDANCE DEFINED	
100% OVER 3 TERMS	OUTSTANDING
100%	EXCELLENT
96 – 99.9%	GOOD
93 – 95.99%	ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT
90.1 – 92.99%	DANGER ZONE
90% & Below	SERIOUS CAUSE FOR CONCERN/POTENTIAL LEGAL ACTION

Safeguarding

School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

FLHS also recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to achieve good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students, young carers and Looked After Children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and students
- Attendance meetings
- Attendance panels
- Early Help Meetings
- Attendance drop in sessions
- Parenting contracts
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies i.e. Gateway
- Learning mentors
- Pupil voice activities
- Friendship groups
- PSHE
- Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) materials
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion centre
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and students.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs FLHS will consider the use of legal sanctions.

Legal Sanctions

Prosecution where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child; if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003). A parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Wigan Council Parenting Contract Protocol.

Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LA officers, Head Teachers and Police to issue Education Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absences from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) regulations 2004 came into force on 27th February 2004 and were amended in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

A Penalty Notice may be issued in the following circumstances:

- Unauthorised absences
- Holidays taken during term-time
- Persistent late arrival to school (after the register closes at 9:05am)

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Wigan Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

ATTENDANCE

Parents /Carers have a responsibility to contact School on their Child's first day with an explanation of absence:

Absence Line: 881986

Please ensure you notify School of any changes to emergency contact numbers.

- **School has a clear Attendance Policy. School make the decision to authorise absence. In certain cases medical evidence will be requested. Wherever possible please avoid medical/dental appointments during school hours.**
- **If NO message is received on day one of absence the Attendance Officer, Ms J Rea, will operate the Truancy Call System. It is imperative you contact School on day one with a reason for your child's absence**
- **If on Day 3 no contact has been received a welfare check will be undertaken by School.**
- **Parents are notified of their child's attendance regularly. I.e. progress review day, parents' evening, interim reports and on-line reporting.**
- **If your child's attendance becomes a cause for concern, a letter will be emailed or posted to the child's home address. Parents/carers could be invited into an Attendance Meeting in School with our Attendance Officer. A home visit could be undertaken.**
- **Unauthorised absences may result in a penalty notice being issued/ legal court proceedings**

If you have any concerns regarding your child's attendance please do not hesitate to contact the attendance team on the above absence line.