



Higher Failsworth Primary School

'Working together for an Education for Life'

Attendance Policy

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Date of next review:	Autumn 2027
Staff Member:	Safeguarding and Pastoral Manager / Head teacher
Policy Ref:	PHW2

Statement of Intent

Higher Failsworth Primary School believes that good attendance is essential for all our pupils if they are to gain the maximum benefit from the education that we provide. School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life, ensuring they are 'school ready, work ready, life ready.'

Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school we will support families to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Ultimately it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children attend school every day. Our school's expected level of attendance over a school year is 95%.

The school's attendance champion is Miss M Warburton and can be contacted via info@higher-failsworth.oldham.sch.uk

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance](#), 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 and the benefits of good attendance
- 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 make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)

[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](#)

Roles and responsibilities

School attendance is everybody's business

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher or School Office any problems that may affect their school attendance

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day, and ensure that their children are collected at the correct time, and inform school if there is a delay
- Ensure that they contact the school in the event of an absence by 9:30am, using the studybugs app or if known in advance, as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend school. (E.G. Dental/medical appointment)
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible and provide proof of an appointment if the child's absence is due to an appointment with another agency (E.G Health)
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance

- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details

We expect that the school will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, and monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents as soon as possible if their child is not in school, and the absence has not been explained
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a health professional or other relevant body will be requested
- Where necessary home visits will be completed
- School may mark an absence as unauthorised retrospectively if contradictory information is found and will notify parents.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition
- When pupils' attendance falls below 95% school will inform parents and advice from other agencies may be sought
- Inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending school regularly or who are persistently late
- Meet regularly with the Local Authority Attendance Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Local Authority Attendance Officer
- Will not accept reasons for absence from pupils or siblings. Reasons for absence must be provided by a parent or carer.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

- Punctuality to school is crucial, lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. The school doors open at 8.45am for FS/KS1 and 8.50am for KS2.
- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- Registration takes place as soon as the school doors are shut (FS/KS1 8.55am and 9am for KS2) and pupils who arrive after this time must enter via the School Office to ensure they are accurately recorded as on the premises, this is done by signing in on the INVENTORY electronic system by an adult.
- Children who arrive after registration 8:55/9-9:25/9.30am will receive L late mark.

- Children who arrive after 9:25/9.30am will receive a U mark (late after register closed) which is classed as an unauthorised absence, and counts towards the 10 unauthorised sessions that can result in improvement notices being issued. Should there not be sufficient improvement following the issue of the improvement notice, a penalty notice may be issued.
- Children who have been for a medical appointment and have provided school with medical evidence will receive a 'medical' registration mark as such.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 12.45pm for FS, 1.00pm for KS1 and 1.30pm for KS2.
- Children who are collected late will need to be signed out using the INVENTORY electronic system by an adult. Parents/carers who are persistently late collecting children will be contacted by the head teacher to discuss this further.

Pupil Leaving During the School Day

During school hours, staff act in loco parentis (in the place of a parent) and are therefore legally responsible for knowing the whereabouts of pupils throughout the school day.

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return on the INVENTORY electronic system.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, within school hours, parents are to report to the School Office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person.

Authorised/Unauthorised leave of absence

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence (holidays) will **NOT** be authorised during term time.

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. There is no clear definition of 'exceptional circumstances' but if something happens that is out of the ordinary, unavoidable or unexpected, then this will be considered.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, before the absence, with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or the school website.

- School staff are not expected to provide additional work for the child during the leave period.
- The Governing Body of Higher Failsworth Primary School has determined that NO holidays taken in term time will be authorised and in accordance with Oldham Local Authority guidance, the school will refer for a fixed penalty notice to be issued for unauthorised holidays of 10 or more sessions (2 sessions = 1 day).
- Absences immediately before or after a scheduled holiday will not be authorised without medical evidence.

Examples of absences (authorised/unauthorised)

Medical Appointments- Where possible, please make medical appointments outside of school hours. However, we understand at times this is sometimes difficult, on these occasions please provide school with a medical card or letter. A medical appointment DOES reduce your child's percentage attendance. If medical evidence is not provided, the school reserves the right to unauthorise the absence. Please be aware we are not able to authorise siblings being taken out of school when they do not have an appointment. These absences will be unauthorised.

Religious observances- School encourage and support our children and their families to celebrate religious events, however children are expected to be in school every day leading up to religious festivals and back in school immediately after. If parents keep their children off school for longer than is entitled these days will not be authorised. School will only authorise the date of the festival, a maximum of 2 days per academic year.

Sporting activities- School acknowledge that there are occasions when children will be required to attend sporting tournaments, competitions or sporting exams during term time. Proof of this must be provided to school. School are unable to authorise competitions that are held over the weekend but where parents choose to travel to the venue on a school day.

Other absences- Children are required to attend school every day. Absences will be unauthorised if a child is absent due to attending a wedding/birthday celebration, child's own birthday, oversleeping due to a late night or appointments for other family members

Extended Leave of Absence

Where a pupil is absent from school for 10 or more consecutive days the school must inform the Local Authority. Extended leave of absence must be requested and risks the child's school place being revoked and filled by another pupil. The school will take the following steps;

- Request sight of travel and or accommodation tickets.
- Agree a return date.
- Inform parents of loss of place after 20 day absence – pupils will be 'off rolled'.
- Parents are expected to contact the school if any circumstances change.

Children Missing from Education

The school recognises that children missing education are at risk of underachieving and may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. We follow the LA guidelines in monitoring such children. If a child is apparently “missing”, we endeavour to find that child as soon as possible, working with partner agencies, including the Police and Social Care if necessary.

Our new Local Authority Attendance Officer (Karen Winkler) works closely with the school and its families to support good attendance. Where there are serious concerns, we work closely with Education Welfare and other agencies to ensure that children are safely in school. Where a child goes missing, we make every attempt to contact the family by phone, letter and home visits. Children missing for more than 10 days **MUST** be referred to the LA (or earlier where there are existing safeguarding concerns), who will attempt to trace the family.

Children who do not attend for more than 20 days without notification are removed from the register.

Penalty Notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), 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 unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, 2 sessions = 1 day).
- 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 notice 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.

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.

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

Fast track to attendance

Fast Track to Attendance is a time focused approach to improve attendance. The aim of Fast Track is to promote early intervention by school and where necessary by the Local Authority. The aim is to ensure that rapid and appropriate action is taken to tackle absence problems as soon as they become apparent. Failure to make and sustain changes will result in the Local Authority prosecuting through the courts.

Strategies to promote good attendance

The school will analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families. Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

The school will notify parents of any concerns regarding their child's attendance. This may be verbally in the first instance or by letter. If no improvements are made and attendance continues to be of concern, then you will be invited into school to discuss this further with the school attendance lead/ Head teacher and with the Local authority attendance officer where necessary. Schools can offer signposting to services/ organise Team Around the Child Multi Agency Meetings or refer to the Family Help Team with consent from parent/carers.

Educational Neglect

Educational Neglect refers to a parent's or carer's failure to ensure their child's educational needs are being met. Children have a legal right to an education and so failing to send the child to school regularly is an example of educational neglect. Following a prosecution for poor attendance, if there is no sustained improvement and lack of engagement to make and sustain changes, school will notify you, prior to completing a Duty and Advice referral to Children's Safeguarding Team under the 'Educational Neglect Policy'. This is in conjunction with Oldham Safeguarding Children's Partnership Protocol.

Rewards

Higher Failsworth Primary School recognises and celebrates good attendance using a variety of rewards. **Each term** children with 97% + attendance will receive a certificate and their own clothes day.

At the end of the summer term any children who have had 100% attendance all year will be rewarded with a gift card.

Where a class achieves 100% weekly attendance they will be rewarded with an extra playtime arranged by the class teacher.

Children celebrating their birthday on a school day will be able to attend school wearing their own clothes

Monitoring and Review Arrangements

The Governing Body has the responsibility of setting down the guidelines and principles with regard to school attendance policy and procedure and ensuring compliance with School

Attendance Regulations. The Governing Body through the Headteacher will monitor and evaluate school attendance levels and review the effectiveness of this policy.