School Attendance Policy

Vision and values

William Farr Church of England Comprehensive School's vision is to provide all members of the school community with the opportunities to engage with 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10) through the highest quality of education, encouragement and endeavour. We are committed to striving for excellence and ensuring that all students are known, valued and can achieve.

Our core values are:

Compassion   *Friendship*   *Perseverance*   *Respect*   *Responsibility*   *Wisdom*

For students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered at William Farr Church of England Comprehensive School, it is vital that they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence;
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically;
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with;
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying;
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring from secondary school and higher education, employment and training.

School's Attendance Leader

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular attendance. This person is the Deputy Headteacher Care and Guidance and can be contacted at school on 01673 866900. This includes attending School Attendance Panels, assessing requests from parents/carers for leave of absence according to school policy and liaising with Heads of Year and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) when concerns arise over individual student attendance. The School's Attendance Leader will provide updates to the Governing Body Committee on school attendance levels.

Form Tutors

The role of the Form Tutor is to:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately on a daily basis for morning and afternoon registrations;
- Promote good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities;
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence to the Head of Year;
- To collect any absence notes and forward them to the School's Attendance Officer.

Heads of Year

The role of the Head of Year is to:

- Monitor attendance and punctuality of the year group with the School's Attendance Leader;
- Liaise with Form Tutors and parents/carers where concerns arise with student attendance and punctuality;
- Promote the importance of regular school attendance to students, Form Tutors and parents/carers;
- Celebrate good attendance with students;
- Work with the EWO to support students with attendance and punctuality issues;
- Attend School Attendance Panels.

Class Teacher

The role of the class teacher is to:

- Take an accurate register for every lesson
- Report any missing students without prior notification of absence by emailing the Attendance Office and Reception, to initiate further investigation
- Mark late arrivals as late and annotate how late using the drop-down menu on the electronic register.
- Do not change any pre-entered code
- If a child arrives at the lesson and they are already pre-coded absent – e mail attendance office.

School's Attendance Officer

The role of the Attendance Officer is to:

- Check registers daily;
- Make 'first day' telephone calls to parents/carers when students are absent from school;
- Request explanations of student absence from parents/carers;
- Liaise with School's Attendance Leader over Leave of Absence requests for students;
- Liaise with the Head of Year over student attendance issues;
- Support the EWO with the collation of attendance data.

Parents/Carers

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996) and allowing absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents should:

- Support and encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- Inform school on the first day of absence and any subsequent days of absence by letter or telephone call and explain the reasons for the absence;
- Request planned absences well in advance;
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an 'exceptional circumstance' (see request for leave of absence section);
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments;
- Contact the school if there are any issues or change of circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.

Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence;
- Arrive in school on time;

- Attend registrations and lessons on time;
- Register at the reception desk if they are late and enter the reason for lateness in the Late Book;
- Register at the reception desk, with a note from parents, if they are leaving the school site during school hours. (see safeguarding section for exemption)

To promote the school's expectation of attendance and punctuality, the following table outlines key times of the school day.

Session	Time	Expectation
Arrival for the School Day	8.30 onwards	Students should not be in school before 8.30, but should arrive in time to be in rooms for the start of registration
Registration	9.00-9.20	Warning bell at 8.57. Students in tutor rooms ready for 9.00am start
Lesson 1	9.20-10.20	Students arrive at lesson ready for punctual start
Break time	10.20 – 10.35	Warning bell at 10.32 to alert students to go to Lesson 2
Lesson 2	10.35 – 11.35	Students arrive at lesson ready for punctual start
5-minute change over time		
Lesson 3	11.40-12.40	Students arrive at lesson ready for punctual start
Lunch	12.40-1.35	Warning bell at 1.30 to alert student to go to afternoon registration
Afternoon Registration	1.35 – 1.40	
Lesson 4	1.40- 2.40	Students arrive at lesson ready for punctual start
5-minute change over time		
Lesson 5	2.45 -3.45	Students arrive at lesson ready for punctual start
School day Finish	3.45	Students should be in lessons until this time

If a parents know in advance of a pupil absence, they should telephone the school 01673 866900, if possible before 8.30am, choose option 1 and leave a message with the following information

- First and Last name
- Year and Tutor Group
- Brief reason for absence (medical or illness)

This process should be repeated on the morning of every subsequent morning of absence.

Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

The role of the EWO is to:

- Regularly liaise and consult with the school regarding attendance issues, which includes weekly meetings with Heads of Year and the School Attendance Leader;
- Provide advice regarding the regulations governing the part-time employment of school children;
- Prepare and recommend legal proceedings in cases of irregular school attendance including fixed penalty notices and Education Supervision Orders;
- Request medical evidence after 3 days of absence if the authenticity of an illness is in doubt and request a 'medical view' (ie paperwork/letter from a medical professional involved in the case) should further support be required;
- Provide 'safe and well' checks after three days of absence without school contact and or if there is a concern raised by or to the school.
- Inform the School Attendance Leader and the Local Authority should a student be absent for 10 consecutive days in accordance with the Local Authority and DfE guidelines.

Lateness and punctuality

It is important that students register on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and come to lessons in accordance with the published school timetable. (as listed above)

All lateness will be recorded daily and causes for concern reported to the Head of Year and the School Attendance Leader.

Arrival after the close of registration without a valid reason will be marked as an 'unauthorised absence' and coded 'U' in line with the Department of Education guidance. This mark shows that the student is on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.

If a student is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an 'authorised absence' coded 'M'. We ask that parents/carers, where possible, make doctors and dental appointments outside school hours or during school holidays.

Parents are encouraged to monitor their child's attendance and punctuality via the 'My Child at School' parent app.

Unauthorised and persistent absence

Unauthorised absence includes any day or session when a student should be in attendance at school and they are absent without the authorisation of the school. This includes unauthorised leave of absence during term time and persistent late arrival at school beyond the registration period without a valid reason.

Persistent absence is defined by the DfE as 'any student who, at any point in the year, has accumulated absence of 10% or more of the available sessions'. The DfE also define 'severe absence' as those pupils who are absent, more than they are present, (those missing 50% or more of education.)

Request for leave of absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances.' The Headteacher can determine the length of the authorised absence and whether the absence is authorised. The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are rare, significant or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

There is no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday. (DfE expectations May'22 state "as Headteachers should only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.")

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence are advised to apply in writing to the school at least 2 weeks prior to the leave date and before making any travel arrangements. Each case will be looked at on an individual basis.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised in the student's record and will be referred to the EWO. This could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued (Section 444A of the Education Act 1996).

School term dates are available from the school website.

Children Missing Education (CME)

The school follows the Lincolnshire Safeguarding procedures and will make enquiries into the location of students with continuous unauthorised absence or those who fail to return from leave of absence granted during term time.

After 5 days of absence, schools have to complete a 'School Risk Assessment for Child Missing Education (CME)' and forward to the CME Officer at the Local Authority.

Safeguarding

If there are child protection concerns, the Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Procedures are followed.

In line with "Good Practice Guidance on Authorising Absence in Educational Establishments without Parental Consent" (Lincolnshire SCP Manual of Procedures April 2022) -the school will consider and may approve a request from a student to authorise an absence, for example to attend an appointment, without Parental Consent.

Strategies for supporting sustained Attendance

As outlined in this policy, the school recognises the clear link between academic success and attendance in school. DfE May'22 "The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%)

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent) and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study)

The school will work with students, parents and other agencies to promote the benefits of good attendance and punctuality.

The following strategies are not exhaustive, and many will only be initiated as hierarchically as other previous strategies are exhausted.

- Use of Parent App to share live attendance data at home
- Letters and phone calls to parents reminding generically or specifically about the importance of attendance
- School staff regular monitoring of attendance and punctuality, including form tutor, Head of Year.
- Promotion of 'Attendance Culture' around the school in such things as displays, tutor time and assemblies
- Celebration and rewards for attendance
- Weekly HoY/EWO meetings to monitor attendance of individuals or key groups
- Strategically use data to analyse and target attendance improvement in identified groups
- Work with parents to identify and where possible remove barriers to attendance

- Look at, where appropriate, part time timetables and reintegration plans for pupils
- Work collaboratively with other schools and agencies to promote attendance
- Have regard for staff training on improving pupil attendance
- Be involved in multi-disciplinary support for families
- Have analysis, awareness and targeted support for Persistent (10%) and severe (50%) absence.
- Use of Legal Intervention and working with the Local Authority to support and improve attendance, such as
  - Parenting Contracts
  - Educational Supervision Orders
  - Attendance Prosecutions
  - Parenting Orders
  - Fixed Penalty Notices

This Policy has been updated, referring to the following publications;

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE May 2022)
- Good Practice Guidance on Authorising Absence in Educational Establishments without Parental Consent" (Lincolnshire SCP Manual of Procedures April 2022)

List of Appendices

1. Attendance Ladder
2. Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance

Attendance Ladder

Equates to:

	100%	OUTSTANDING
4 School days missed in an academic year	**98%**	VERY GOOD
7 School days missed in an academic year	**96%**	GOOD
10 School days missed in an academic year	**95%**	ALMOST THERE
11 School days missed in an academic year	**94%**	IMPROVEMENT NEEDED
20 School days missed in an academic year	**90%**	CONCERNED ATTENDANCE OFFICE WILL BE IN TOUCH
29 School days missed in an academic year	**85%**	VERY CONCERNED

Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance

Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities

Published: May 2022

Applies from: September 2022

All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.	Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand. Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.	Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.	Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.	Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance. Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance. If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.

Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care. Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders. Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continued support as for persistenly absent pupils and: Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Not applicable.	Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families. Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area. Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children. Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.

Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.	Ofsted considers schools' efforts to improve or sustain high attendance as part of inspections. Multi-academy trusts regularly review attendance data and support schools.	DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making. Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.	DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.

Department for Education