



Attendance Policy

Date of Review: September 2018

Approved by: Trust Board

Next Review Date: September 2019

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Featherstone Academy is a successful academy and your child plays their part in making it so. We are committed to providing a quality education for all our students. This can only be achieved with full attendance and the academy will do its best to ensure maximum possible attendance, so that any problems that interfere with good attendance are identified and remedied as soon as possible.

For your child to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, on time and every day that the academy is open. Pupils should only be absent if it is completely unavoidable.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence seriously affects their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at the academy is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from the academy without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend the academy regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this academy, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend the academy on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

EXPECTATIONS

We expect the following from all students:

- That they will attend the academy every day it is open, achieving a minimum of 96% or above attendance, unless they are genuinely ill.
- That they will be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will inform their Form Tutor, Attendance and Welfare Officer or Deputy Head of any problems which affect attendance or punctuality.

We expect the following from parents/carers in supporting the Home/School agreement with regards to attendance and punctuality:

- To ensure pupils attend the academy regularly, on time and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- To ensure they contact the academy immediately whenever their child is unable to attend, using the dedicated attendance telephone number 01977 722805. • To provide a written note in their child's planner when they return to the academy.
- To ensure that their child is appropriately prepared for the day.
- To respond to any messages in their planner regarding attendance.
- To contact the academy in confidence whenever they have a problem concerning attendance or punctuality.
- Not to arrange a holiday in term time.
- To respond to the appropriate person regarding letters of concern immediately.
- To make every effort to arrange dental and medical appointments out of the academy day.
- That telephone contact numbers are available and if changed, the academy is informed immediately.

Parents can expect the following from The Featherstone Academy:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact from the academy when a pupil fails to attend the academy without providing good reason or when a pupil is truanting.
- Immediate response to problems notified to us.
- Celebrate and reward good and improving attendance through competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Support when there is a problem of long term illness.
- Involvement of the Senior Leadership Team and the Police with any truancy sweeps.
- Follow up procedures from the Form Tutor and AWO (Attendance Welfare Officer). These are instigated when:
 - a) Attendance drops below 95%.
 - b) There are obvious patterns of repeated absence or lateness.
 - c) When lateness or truancy is an issue.

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent* of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) To age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) To any special educational needs he/ she may have Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

Furthermore, the Education Act 1996 and subsequent amendments to legislation give schools and local authorities the powers to take legal action against parents to enforce attendance at the school they are registered to attend.

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Illness

- If your child feels ill in the morning please provide them with appropriate pain relief/medication and send them to school. Any medication should be handed in to Reception who will administer it when required. Your child should be in school if they have a minor illness such as a headache, cold, sore throat or period pains.
- If your child is ill i.e. to the extent that they cannot get out of bed, then please ring the academy to notify the attendance team of their absence. Please ensure that your child returns to the academy as soon as possible, even if they are not 100%.
- If your child is absent from the academy for 4 days or less then you must provide a written note in their planner. On their return to the academy, pupils will be asked for their note by their form tutor, failure to provide a note may result in your child being placed in isolation.
- If your child is absent from the academy for 5 days or longer please provide medical evidence, i.e. an appointment card, indicating the reason for absence.
- If your child is on the Fast Track or Monitoring initiatives, we require medical verification for any absence.

Medical Appointments

A full day's absence will not be authorised for a medical appointment. Please arrange all appointments outside the school day. If the appointment is unavoidable, your child must come to school before and after the appointment. Any full day's absence will be marked as parental condoned truancy.

Requests for absence during term-time

Due to Government legislation the Academy is no longer able to authorise any holiday during school time. This absence will therefore be recorded as unauthorised absence on your child's attendance record.

A Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority following your child's absence. Penalty notices are issued at £60 per parent* (if paid within 21 days) and £120 (if paid within 28 days) for each child. A Holiday Notification form is available from Reception or our website.

If you do not notify us but we have evidence that your child has been on holiday, a fixed penalty fine may still be issued.

If clarification is needed, please ring the Academy Attendance line on 01977 722805.

CELEBRATING AND REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE

Good and improved attendance is rewarded by the academy with various incentives for individual pupils, form groups and whole school. These include prize draws, days out and the yearly reward trip in September.

RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE

Where we have had no contact from a parent/carer the Academy will respond in the following manner:

- First day telephone contact/text will be implemented for all pupils after 9.30am. Further attempts at communication may also be made. On different days throughout the week, members of the attendance team and /or a member of the Senior Leadership Team may visit any child who is absent from school. Our attendance team may be accompanied by a member of the Neighbourhood Policing Team during these visits.
- Form Tutors will refer to the AWO or Deputy Head teacher with any concerns over non-attendance.
- With continued non-attendance the case will be brought to the attention of the Attendance/Welfare Officer. Further action may include participation in attendance improvement initiatives, home visits and/or meetings between the academy, parents/carers and pupils and, if appropriate, other agencies in an attempt to identify and solve the problems which are preventing the pupil from attending the academy.
- In cases where attendance does not improve appropriate action will be taken by the Attendance/Welfare Officer in liaison with the Deputy Head.

- Re-integration – the return of a pupil to the academy after long term absence requires special planning. The Pastoral Team and AWO in consultation with the Form Tutor and possibly SENCO, will be responsible for establishing and managing a programme for return which meets the individuals' needs. Staff will be informed of the return of long term absentees and of any special arrangements that have been made.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from the academy has to be classified by the academy (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of an absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the academy for a good reason like genuine illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the academy does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Academy and or the Local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Holidays

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular non-attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, excusing them from attending makes the situation worse as it gives the impression that attendance does not matter.

Persistent absence:

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level damages a child's educational prospects.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Absence Procedures for parents/carers

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence on the Attendance Line 01977 722805.
- Provide a written note in their planner on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.

Personal Details

It is vital that parental details are correct. There are times when we need to contact parents/carers to discuss absence or more importantly to contact a parent in the event of an emergency. Data check sheets are distributed at the start of the year and it is the expectation that parents notify the academy of any changes in personal contact details.

MOVING TO A DIFFERENT SCHOOL OR ACADEMY

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school/academy they must inform The Featherstone Academy as soon as possible. **Your child/children must continue their education with the Academy** until their start date at the new school. Schools/academies may be reluctant to take a child onto roll where attendance is low and so it is imperative that they continue to attend.

A pupil will not be removed from the academy's roll until we have received confirmation that they have started at the new school/Academy and the following information has been received and investigated.

- The date the pupil is leaving this school/academy and starting a new school/academy.
- The address of the new school/academy, and confirmation from that school/academy that the pupil has been admitted.
- The new home address.

The pupils' school/academy record will then be sent on to the new school/academy as soon as possible. In the case of movement abroad records will be provided for the pupil to take with them.

In the event that the academy has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Local Authority as a 'Child Missing Education'.

The academy will complete a 'Common Transfer File' (CTF) for all pupils leaving the academy for another school/academy.

NEW PUPILS

Any parent wishing to apply for a place at the Academy may do so following our admissions policy.

*The definition of a parent/carer is:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who, although they are not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person with whom the child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of their relationship with the child;
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.