



The John Fisher School

Attendance Policy

Responsible: Governors' SLAW Committee

Next Review Date: December 2020

1 Introduction

The John Fisher School attaches great importance to the regular attendance of its students. The aim of this policy is to encourage students to attend school regularly so that they take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them at this school.

In framing this policy the Governors have kept in the forefront of their discussions the statutory duty of schools to record student attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session (Period 5). This duty is applicable to all students of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

2 Promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the student.

The Home/School Agreement outlines how we will work with parents/carers and our expectations of what they will need to do to ensure their child(ren) achieve(s) good attendance.

We will ensure that our students are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them.

The school will seek to encourage students to attend school and to be punctual by a range of incentives. For students with outstanding attendance, this may include:

- ☑ Recognition at year group assemblies, newsletters and notice boards.
- ☑ Letters home
- ☑ Certificates
- ☑ Queue jumper passes

3 Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets has been established and a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team is responsible for overseeing this work. The school makes use of the attendance information and its own data, when setting its targets. Targets will relate to national averages.

Our absence target rate is currently 4% or lower:

The school's absence rate for 2015 - 2016 was 4.7%

The school's absence rate for 2016 - 2017 was 3.5%

The school's absence rate for 2017 – 2018 was 4.7%

4 Absence

Any student who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher, or a member of staff acting on their behalf, can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education.

The codes can be found at the back of this policy in Appendix A

4.1 Persistent Absence [PA]

All students whose attendance level falls below 85% will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance.

The action plan will include engagement with all parties, including the Borough School Attendance Service, who can support the student's attendance.

4.2 Categorisation of Absence

Any student who is on roll but not present in the school will be recorded within one of these categories:

A. Unauthorised absence

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

B. Authorised absence

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

C. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

If a student is receiving education off site or is attending at a school where they are dual registered with, the school will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

4.3 Leave of absence in term time

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a student's potential achievement. The school will consider any application for leave of absence and will only agree to authorize the absence in exceptional circumstances; parents must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence.

4.4 Procedures in the case of absence

- ☑ Parents are encouraged to telephone the absence line at school on the first day of absence of their son. They should indicate the reason for the absence and, if possible, predict the likely date of their son's return to school.
- ☑ On the first morning of any unexplained absence from school parents will receive a text message informing them of their child's absence and requesting that they contact school regarding the absence. The school uses the 'PS Connect' messaging service.
- ☑ Where no contact is made with a parent, this is followed up by letter or telephone.
- ☑ No more than 3 days should pass before a parent is contacted regarding their son's absence from school.
- ☑ When a boy returns to school after being absent his parent(s) must provide him with a note explaining the reason for his absence. This should be firstly given to his Form Tutor and then passed onto the appropriate KS Admin support officer (Mrs H Maynard KS3, Mrs M Cody KS4, Mrs K Cooney KS5). Failure to produce a note should be followed up immediately by means of a telephone call.
- ☑ All such notes, and notes of telephone messages, must be dated and signed.
- ☑ If Form Tutors receive what they consider to be an unsatisfactory explanation they should bring the matter to the attention of their Director of Learning.
- ☑ Unexplained absences will be followed up by telephone or by enlisting the help of the Borough School Attendance Service Mrs J. Cohen.
- ☑ Attention should be paid to any student who rarely completes a full week at school.

4.5 Approving Absence

The Governors acknowledge the law which says that parents may not authorise the absence of their son from school. Such authorisation may only be sanctioned by the school. Absence may be authorised retrospectively if the school is satisfied with the explanation offered.

5 Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.45am. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any student arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence, unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. public transport delays, adverse weather conditions, etc.

Where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Students arriving after the start of the school day, but before registers close, will be recorded as late

5.1 Procedure in the event of lateness to school

Students who are not present at registration, due to their late arrival at school, must report to the Student Office and sign the "Late Book". The reason for their lateness will be recorded in the book.

Students are marked as late if they arrive after the registration bell goes at 8.45a.m. Senior staff monitor the gate every morning and record latecomers.

5.2 Persistent lateness to school

A 'late' list will be generated every fortnight and circulated to Directors of Learning and Senior Leadership members. The table below outlines the sanctions for lateness rates.

Level	No of 'lates' over a 2 week period	Sanction
1	2	DoL Detention
2	3	SLT Detention
3	4+	Saturday Detention

Persistent lateness (level 3 or above twice in a half term) will result in parents/carers being invited into school to discuss and resolve the situation. Repeated persistent lateness will be referred to the Local Authority BSAS (aka Education Welfare Officer).

6 Early departure from school

Students who have to leave school for such things as medical/dental treatment must report to the Student Office, with written evidence/authorisation, together with a completed 'Yellow slip' in order to sign the "Signing Out" book.

The Yellow slip must be countersigned by the student's Director of Learning or, in their absence, a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team.

If they return to school, later in the day, they must report to the student office in order to sign themselves back in.

7 Legal action to enforce school attendance

If a student incurs unauthorised absence in term time, the parents/carers will be eligible to receive a Penalty Notice.

Why have Penalty Notices been introduced?

Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally. Missing school lowers a student's achievement levels and disrupts school routines and affects the learning of others. It can also cause a student to be vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime. Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer-term life opportunities.

The Local Authority is authorised to issue Penalty Notices on referral from schools, for unauthorised absence, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1996, and the Education and Inspection Act 2006.

What is a Penalty Notice?

Under existing legislation, parents and carers commit an offence if their child fails to attend school regularly, and the absences are classed as unauthorised i.e. (those for which the school cannot, or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The fine is £60 if paid within 28 days of issue of the Penalty Notice, increasing to £120 if paid after this date, but within 42 days of issue. Penalty Notices are issued to each Parent/Carer in respect of each child not attending school. There is no statutory right of appeal once a Penalty Notice has been issued. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid the matter will be taken before the Magistrate's court.

In addition, the local authority and school can use other various legal powers if a child is missing school without a good reason. These include:

- ☑ Supervision Order
- ☑ Parenting Order
- ☑ School Attendance Order
- ☑ Penalty Notice

Taken from: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

Parents/carers can be given one or more of these orders but the council doesn't have to do this before prosecuting you.

Parenting Order

This means you have to go to parenting classes. You'll also have to do what the court says to improve your child's school attendance.

Education Supervision Order

If the council thinks you need support getting your child to go to school but you're not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order.

A supervisor will be appointed to help you get your child into education. The local council can do this instead of prosecuting you, or as well.

School Attendance Order

You'll get a School Attendance Order if the local council thinks your child isn't getting an education. You have 15 days to provide evidence that you've registered your child with a school or that you're giving them [home education](#).

The order will require you to send your child to a specific school. If you don't, you may be prosecuted.

Penalty notice

Instead of being prosecuted, you can be given a penalty notice. The penalty is £60, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If you don't pay the fine you may be prosecuted.

Prosecution

You could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court also gives you a Parenting Order.

Appendix A

E Registration

Registers are legal documents. For this reason and because of the important function they fulfil in the daily life of the school the information recorded in them must be accurate. At the beginning of each Academic Year the Form Tutors will be provided with a sheet containing the names, dates of birth, addresses and home telephone numbers of the students in their class. This must be checked for accuracy and returned to the Student Office with any amendments. Emergency telephone numbers are obtainable through Sims.net or the Student Office. Any amendments to this information that is received during the year should be passed on to the Student Office as soon as possible.

The School uses Sims.net Lesson Monitor in its place. **All** classes must be registered in Sims at the beginning of each lesson, not forgetting to do the register twice for double lessons. Please see the appropriate KS Admin support officer for any manual registers that may be required (Mrs H Maynard KS3, Mrs M Cody KS4, Mrs K Cooney KS5).

Marking of E Registration

☑ If a boy is present at registration a 'forward slash' should be entered in the appropriate morning slot and a 'back slash' entered for the afternoon slot. This will have the effect of creating a herring-bone pattern across the page. Students who are not present at registration must be entered as a circle.

☑ A letter "L" should be entered, to indicate that a boy has arrived late to school or to your lesson. (Students who are late to school and who do not appear on the late gate register taken daily by Senior Staff, must go to the Student Office and sign the "Late Book" on their arrival at school).

In the case of "Absence" the following symbols should be inserted, indicating absence for that session. There are times that a student may be registered as being absent for a school session when such an absence should not be included in his attendance record or, indeed, the overall school statistics for absence. These are shown in the following table.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity

X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances