



**FEVERSHAM**  
EDUCATION TRUST

# Feversham Education Trust

*TRANSFORMING LIVES, TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES*

## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

|                   |         |  |                             |  |                         |  |            |   |
|-------------------|---------|--|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|------------|---|
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| Purpose of this statement:                          | To outline the Trust policy on Attendance and Punctuality. |                          |
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## **Introduction**

The School Attendance Policy operates within the context of the School mission statement. It is the aim of the School to support every pupil to have maximum attendance and thus to achieve their full academic and social potential through the school community. To realise this aim, the School will work in partnership with parents in offering pupils academic and pastoral support.

The policy should be implemented alongside the Department for Education guidance document 'School Attendance' and the School Behaviour Policy which sets out the protocols for the day to day management of behaviour, including attendance and punctuality.

## **Aims**

- To provide clear guidelines about how the School promotes and attains high levels of pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure that all stakeholders understand the School's expectations of themselves, and each other, and strive to attain them.
- To support the mission, vision and values of the Trust and its establishments.

## **Policy Ownership**

The Trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory or Trust framework. The Trust has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to the Trust Central Team, Local Governing Body and Principal of each Trust school.

The Local Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team at each Trust school has a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success. To support the mission, vision and values of the Trust and its establishments.

## **Definitions**

'Session' is a term related to the recording of absence data - every school day must have two 'sessions' (morning and afternoon) divided by a break for which attendance must be recorded.

'Authorised absence' means that the School has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

'Unauthorised absence' is where the School is not satisfied with the reasons given for an absence.

## **Legal Duty**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents to ensure children of compulsory school age are receiving efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs the child may have. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

A parent who fails to ensure that their child attends school regularly is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

## **School Commitment**

Everyone in school is committed to promoting good attendance and punctuality. All members of staff are made aware of how their role impacts on attendance and punctuality as well as the expectations of them in ensuring consistent application of the policy and the use of absence codes.

The School will support pupils and parents to achieve good attendance and punctuality, working closely with parents where absence is a cause for concern. The School strives for 100% attendance for all pupils. The whole school attendance target is 97%. If a pupil achieves at least 97% attendance in one whole school year, they will have missed less than 5 days from school.

## **Responsibilities**

- **Feversham Education Trust will:**
  - Devise and review the Trust Attendance and Punctuality Policy.
  - Set and review the Trust level targets for Attendance and Punctuality as part of the School Annual Operating Statement, Strategic Plan and target setting process.
  
- **The Governing Body will:**
  - Ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the Attendance and Punctuality Policy throughout the School and are known by parents.
  - Review the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy in light of the School's termly and annual reports.
  
- **The Principal will:**
  - Ensure the school ethos promotes and celebrates good attendance and punctuality.
  - Ensure strategies are in place to promote and implement the Attendance and Punctuality Policy throughout the School.
  - Monitor the school offer to ensure a delivery of a curriculum which is engaging and personalised to the needs of the pupils.
  - Monitor data on attendance and punctuality via reports from the Senior Leader responsible for attendance.
  - Determine, in collaboration with the Senior Leader responsible for attendance, whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the School's official request form, or absences which have taken place for which no request was made/approved.

- Provide the Trust Central Team Governing Body with half-termly data on attendance and punctuality, including data about pupils who are persistent absentees and review practice in relation to attendance and punctuality
  - Provide an Annual Report on attendance and punctuality to the Governing Body.
- **The Senior Leader responsible for attendance will:**
    - Lead initiatives to promote the profile of attendance throughout the School.
    - With the support of the Pastoral Team, interrogate and analyse data on attendance and punctuality on a weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis and prepare reports, as required, for the Pastoral Team, Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body.
    - Oversee the arrangements for 'Pastoral Review Meetings' and quality assure the action plans devised.
    - Comply with the Department for Education Statutory Guidance on Children Missing Education by informing the Local Authority of the details of children who are regularly absent, missing from school following a leave of absence and prior to removing a child from the roll of the school.
    - Comply with the requirement set out in the Local Authority's Code of Conduct when requesting issuance of penalty notices.
- **The Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer will:**
    - Monitor attendance on daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis, contacting parents of pupils who have been identified as at-risk, to challenge absences and encourage early return to school.
    - Ensure data on attendance and punctuality is displayed in prominent places visible to pupils.
    - Where appropriate, visit the home and/or make a referral to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service.
    - Issue appropriate sanctions to pupils for whom attendance and punctuality is a cause for concern.
    - Manage the arrangements for pupils who need to attend appointments during school time.
    - Work with the Senior Leader responsible for attendance to maintain an up to date Attendance Risk Register and Punctuality Risk Register of high risk pupils in designated year groups.
    - Lead 'Pastoral Review Meetings' and develop an action plan involving the child, parent and, where appropriate, other agencies for pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality falls below the expected level.
    - Co-ordinate the support plan for pupils returning to school after a prolonged absence.
    - Co-ordinate the collation of all the documentary evidence required by the Local Authority for issuing a penalty notice or prosecution by the Local Authority for unauthorised absence.

- **Learning Co-ordinators/Form Tutors/Class Teachers responsible for registering morning and afternoon sessions will:**
  - Provide regular advice, encouragement, challenge and support to the class as a whole and individually to pupils about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality using the data provided by the Administrative Team.
  - Ensure that the attendance register using SIMs is taken at the start of the first session of the school day and once during the second session.
  - Ensure pupils' absence notes or verbal messages related to attendance and punctuality are provided to the Administration Team/Pastoral Team.
  - Be alert and deal with any signs of disaffection which could result in poor attendance and punctuality and impact on learning and ensure this is recorded on SIMs.
  - Identify absence trends or concerns and raise with the relevant member of Administration Team/Pastoral Team staff.
  
- **Administrative Staff will:**
  - Monitor registration on a daily basis.
  - Be the first point of contact for parents and relevant school staff regarding pupil absence and appointments.
  - Collate and issue all attendance and punctuality data on a daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis to the Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer and Senior Leader Responsible for attendance.
  - Maintain a record of all applications for leave of absence during term time and requests for issuing a penalty notice.
  
- **Parents will:**
  - Be aware that it is an offence for their child to be absent from school without a valid reason.
  - Be aware that only the School can determine if an absence from school is 'authorised'.
  - Ensure their child arrives at school on time (before the attendance register is closed for the session), dressed in full uniform and ready and equipped to learn.
  - Inform the School if their child is unable to attend, including the reason for absence and the expected date of return.
  - Ensure that all appointments, where possible, are arranged after school.
  - Avoid arranging holidays/leave during term time except in exceptional circumstances.
  - Ensure that all requests for leave during term time are made by completing the 'Leave of Absence During Term Time Request Form', where possible at least 1 month in advance.
  - Be aware that for unauthorised absences, the Governing Body reserves the right to apply to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice (fine) or remove a child from the roll of the school.
  - Ensure their child attends all intervention programmes agreed by the School.

- **Pupils will:**
  - Aim to achieve 100% attendance and punctuality by arriving to school on time every day.
  - Come to school well prepared and with the right attitude; to enjoy and achieve.
  - Be proud of achieving excellent attendance and punctuality.
  - Be punctual to all lessons.
  - Ensure they are registered for all timetabled lessons and inform the relevant member of staff if they are not able to be registered.
  - Ensure all notes/appointment cards are passed to the relevant member of staff.
  - Speak to the appropriate member of staff if there are any problems that may affect attendance, punctuality and/or learning.

### **Registration**

The School will ensure that an attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of the school day and once during the second session. In addition, all teaching staff must check that the pupils timetabled to be in their lessons are present for each session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Registers will be marked using the Department for Education Attendance and Absence Codes.

### **Appointments**

All appointments, where possible, must be arranged after school.

Parents should provide advance notice by way of a medical card and/or letter for any time off school required for medical appointments.

Time away from school as a result of an appointment must be kept to a minimum – children should not be absent for the whole day/whole morning/whole afternoon.

The Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer will manage appointments, keeping the Administrative Team and Senior Leader responsible for attendance informed of authorised appointments.

Pupils will not be allowed to leave the school during school hours unless they are collected by a parent.

### **Absences**

On the first day of absence, parents should telephone the School Office before 9.00am to inform them of the reason for the pupil's absence and the likely duration of the absence. Personal or written communication to the School is also acceptable.



Where no information has been received by 9.00am on the first day of absence, the School will telephone the home of the absent pupil to enquire regarding the absence.

Parents are requested to send a note with the pupil upon their return after an absence, stating clearly the dates of absence and the reason. Failure to provide a written explanation following an absence may result in the absence being marked as unauthorised.

Absences for which satisfactory written explanations have not been received within five days of the pupil's return to school may be marked as unauthorised.

It is the responsibility of the Principal, not the parent, to decide whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Such decisions will be made in accordance with Government regulations and guidance.

### **Attendance and Absence data**

For attendance over one whole school year for each pupil:

| <b>Attendance</b> | <b>Missed Days</b>                             |
|-------------------|--|
| 100%              | 0  |
| 98%               | Less than 4 days / 8 sessions                  |
| 97%               | Less than 5 days / 10 sessions (school target) |
| 95%               | Less than 10 days / 20 sessions                |
| 90%               | 20 days / 40 sessions                          |
| 85%               | 27 ½ days / 55 sessions                        |
| 80%               | 37 ½ days / 75 sessions                        |

For attendance over 5 years for each pupil:

| <b>Attendance</b> | <b>Missed Weeks</b>                        |
|-------------------|--|
| 85-90%            | 19 weeks = ½ year absence from school      |
| 80%               | 38 weeks = 1 full year absence from school |

### **Persistent Absence**

According to the Department for Education guidelines, a pupil will be considered as a persistent absentee if their attendance is 90% or lower (i.e. 10% or more sessions are missed).

Any pupil who is at the Persistent Absence threshold or at risk of moving towards that threshold is placed on the Attendance Risk Register and given priority for intervention.

## Term Time Leave and Holidays

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013 prohibits the Principal/Headteacher of a school from granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an **advance application** has been made by the parent and the Principal/Headteacher considers that there are **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application.

The request for leave of absence must be made at least 1 month in advance by completing the 'Leave of Absence During Term Time Request Form' (see Appendix 1). The form is available from the School Office. Each case will be considered on merit, taking into account the individual facts and the exceptional circumstances.

For the purpose of defining 'exceptional circumstances' and as a guiding principle only, the Principal may consider if the reasons given for requesting leave are: **rare, significant, unavoidable and short**.

The following factors will also be taken into consideration when considering requests for leave of absence during term time:

- Can the event for which leave of absence is requested be reasonably taken during school holidays;
- Levels of attendance and unauthorised absence over the last 12 months;
- Any leave of absence taken previously;
- Whether the leave is during the exam period, controlled exam periods or will result in not meeting assessment deadlines;
- Age and year group of the pupil.

The School will not consider the following to be exceptional circumstances:

- The availability of cheap holidays;
- The availability of the desired accommodation;
- An overlap at the beginning or end of the school term.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the Principal will decide the number of school days a child can be away from school and the agreed date of return to school.

Where a leave of absence is **not** granted or where the child fails to return to school by the agreed date following approval of leave of absence, then the Principal will pass on the details to the Local Authority in line with the duty around reporting children missing education.

The Principal may request the Local Authority to issue both parents with a penalty notice for each child for absence from school.

In certain circumstances, the Local Governing Body may decide to remove the child from the roll of the school.

## **Managing Absence/Lateness: Daily Monitoring**

- **Administrative Staff will:**

- Ensure that any pupil who arrives after the register has been taken signs in at the Reception Office.
- Ensure the attendance register is updated with details of pupils who arrive late.
- Ensure details of pupils and the reasons for the late arrival are communicated to the Learning Co-ordinators/Form Tutors/Class Teachers, the Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer and Senior Leader responsible for attendance.
- Ensure accurate details are noted of parents contacting the School about their child's absence – including the reason for the absence and the likely length of absence.
- Contact parents by telephone who fail to notify the School of their child's absence by 9.00am on the 1st day of absence, ensuring that any follow up action required as a result of the contact with the parent is flagged up to the Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer and Senior Leader responsible for attendance.
- Send a text to all parents of pupils arriving late to school, informing them of their child's failure to arrive on time.
- Ensure no pupil is allowed to leave school for an appointment without the presence of a parent and appropriate school authorisation (e.g. slip).
- Send a daily email to the Attendance Officer and the Senior Leader responsible for attendance providing the % level of attendance and punctuality each day and the cumulative attendance for the term.

- **The Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer will:**

- Make follow-up phone calls to parents of absent pupils who have been identified as at risk, to challenge absences and encourage early return to school.
- Authorise appointments.
- Escalate any absences causing concern to the Senior Leader responsible for attendance.

## **Managing Absence/Lateness: Weekly Monitoring**

- **Administrative Staff will:**

- Produce weekly attendance and punctuality data for Learning Co-ordinators / Form Tutors/ Class Teachers, the Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer and the Senior Leader responsible for attendance on attendance by class and by pupil.
- Display weekly data on attendance and punctuality in prominent place visible to pupils.

- **The Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer will review the weekly attendance and punctuality data and:**

- Issue an appropriate sanction to a pupil who has been late more than once (e.g. a detention) and inform parents if appropriate.
- Contact parents by telephone to inform them of the School's concern regarding attendance or punctuality, particularly if there are patterns to absences or lateness.
- Contact parents by telephone if their child's aggregate attendance for the year to-date falls below 97% for the first time. This excludes pupils who have an attendance below 97% for an authorised reason.

- **The Senior Leader responsible for attendance will:**
  - Keep an overview of weekly attendance across the School.
  - Agree appropriate intervention strategies with the Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer.
  - Provide an update to the Senior Leadership Team.

### **Responding to Absence/Lateness: Half-Termly Monitoring**

- **Administrative Staff will:**
  - Produce half-termly attendance and punctuality data for Learning Co-ordinators / Form Tutors/ Class Teachers, the Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer and the Senior Leader responsible for attendance on attendance by class and by pupil.
- **The Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer, in liaison with the Senior Leader responsible for attendance, will:**
  - Update the Attendance Risk Register as follows:
    - i. Pupils on 99-100% attendance are on level 1 (no risk of Persistent Absence);
    - ii. Pupils on 97-98% attendance are on level 2 (low risk of Persistent Absence);
    - iii. Pupils on 95-96% attendance are on level 3 (moderate risk of Persistent Absence);
    - iv. Pupils on 93-94% attendance are on level 4 (high risk of Persistent Absence);
    - v. Pupils on attendance of below 93% are on level 5 (high risk of Persistent Absence).
  - Update the Punctuality Risk Register as follows:
    - i. Pupils with no lates in the previous half-term are on level 1;
    - ii. Pupils with 1-6 lates in the previous half-term are on level 2;
    - iii. Pupils with 7-10 lates in the previous half-term are on level 3;
    - iv. Pupils with 11-15 lates in the previous half-term are on level 4;
    - v. Pupils with more than 15 lates in the previous half-term are on level 5.
  - Arrange a 'Pastoral Review Meeting' with pupils and parents for any pupils placed on Level 5 of the Attendance Risk Register or Punctuality Risk Register to:
    - i. Discuss levels of authorised and unauthorised absences;
    - ii. Discuss punctuality levels;
    - iii. Discuss causes for the levels of absence and lates;
    - iv. Provide challenge and support to improve attendance and punctuality by the school, parent, pupil and, where appropriate, other external agencies;
    - v. Set an action plan with achievable and realistic attendance and punctuality targets;
    - vi. Set a review date.
- **The Senior Leader responsible for attendance will:**
  - Keep an overview of half-termly Attendance Risk Register across the School.
  - Agree appropriate intervention strategies with the Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer.
  - Agree list of pupils requiring Pastoral Review Meetings.

- Prepare the Trust Central Team and Local Governing Body with half-termly data on attendance and punctuality, including data about pupils who are persistent absentees and leave of absence requests and their outcomes.

### **Managing Absence/Lateness: Termly Monitoring**

- **The Administrative Team will:**
  - Produce termly attendance and punctuality data for Learning Co-ordinators / Form Tutors/ Class Teachers, the Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer and the Senior Leader responsible for attendance on attendance by class and by pupil.
  - Display termly data on attendance and punctuality in a prominent place visible to pupils.
  - Issue letters of concern to parents/carer of pupils with attendance below 93%.
  - Issue letters of praise and celebration to parents/carer of pupils who achieve 100% attendance and punctuality.
- **The Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer will:**
  - Recognise, celebrate and reward pupils who achieve 100% attendance and punctuality each term in assemblies.

### **Responding to Absence/Lateness: Annual Monitoring**

- **The Administrative Team will:**
  - Produce annual attendance and punctuality data for Learning Co-ordinators / Class Teachers (in the case of primary phase), the Attendance Officer/Student Service Officer and the Senior Leader responsible for attendance on attendance by class and by pupil.
  - Issue the Principal's Letter of Recognition for 100% attendance.
- **The Senior Leader responsible for attendance will:**
  - Undertake a final review of the Attendance Risk Register.
  - Review the impact of the intervention strategies.
  - Prepare a report for the Principal.
- **The Principal will:**
  - Provide the Trust Central Team and Local Governing Body with an Annual Report on attendance and punctuality, including data about pupils who are persistent absentees and leave of absence requests and their outcomes.

### **Re-integration of Pupils Following Long Term Absence**

The School recognises the key role it can play in ensuring successful reintegration of pupils returning after a prolonged period of absence, perhaps due to illness.

The School will work in partnership with parents and external agencies (if appropriate), to assist a smooth reintegration back into school; ensuring a flexible approach to meeting the pupil's needs.

All relevant staff will be informed of the child's circumstances and a member of staff will be nominated to oversee the pupil's return.

The pupil's peers will also be used to ensure they support the child's reintegration.

### **Sanctions**

The School, via the Local Authority, may exercise its legal powers to address poor attendance in school. These powers include:

- **Penalty Notices:** Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows penalty notices (fines) to be issued to parents. They are an alternative measure to the prosecution of parents who fail to ensure that their child attends school. A penalty notice will be issued by the Local Authority in line with their Code of Conduct when a child's absence has not been authorised by the School. This is issued to both parents for each child. The penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per parent per child if paid between 21 and 28 days. If one or both parents fail to pay the penalty notice in full, then the Local Authority may decide to prosecute the parents.
- **Prosecution:** If a child fails to attend school regularly at which they are registered then the parents may be guilty of an offence and may be prosecuted by the Local Authority. They have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order under section 443 of the Education Act 1996 or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The fines available to the courts if the parents are found guilty could be between £1000 and £2500. The courts can also sentence parents for imprisonment for up to 3 months.

### **Removal from the Roll of the School**

The Governing Body has the legal power to remove a child from the roll of the school in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulation 2006.

When a child is removed from the roll of the school, parents will be required to make a fresh application for admission. Where the year group in which a place is required is full to the published admission number, then it will not be possible to allow the child to be offered their place back at the school.

Parents who are refused re-admission will be given a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel. There is no guarantee that the independent appeal panel will uphold a child's appeal.

Where the appeal is not upheld, a place will be offered by the Local Authority at another school.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout all Trust schools. The Trust will monitor the operation and effectiveness of arrangements referred to in this policy at each Trust school. The Trust will review this policy every two years in consultation with each Trust school.

## Appendix 1: Leave of Absence During Term Time Request Form

### Guidance Notes

- Please ensure this form is completed at least 1 month prior to requesting leave. Completing this form **does not** mean your request has been approved.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013 states that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances** (*see below*).
- If your leave of absence is either approved and you fail to ensure that your child returns to school by the agreed date or your child takes leave when your leave of absence request is not approved, then the absence will be marked as ‘unauthorised’ on the attendance register.
- For such ‘unauthorised’ absence, you may be liable to be issued with a penalty notice (fine). The fine is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per parent per child if paid between 21 and 28 days. If one or both parents fail to pay the penalty notice in full, then you may be prosecuted. The School also reserves the right to remove your child from the roll of the school. Where this happens, please be aware that it may not always be possible to re-admit your child to the school.

**Exceptional Circumstances:** In considering whether any ‘exceptional circumstances’ apply, the Principal / Headteacher will consider if the reasons are **rare, significant, unavoidable** and **short**. The Principal / Headteacher will also take into consideration the factors listed below:

- can the event for which leave of absence is requested be reasonably taken during school holidays
- levels of attendance and unauthorised absence over the last 12 months
- any leave of absence taken previously
- whether the leave is during the exam period, controlled exam periods or will result in not meeting assessment deadlines
- age and year group of the student.

| CHILD'S DETAILS        |  |            |  |
|------------------------|--|------------|--|
| Surname                |  | First Name |  |
| Date of Birth          |  | Year Group |  |
| Address                |  |            |  |
| PARENT/CARER'S DETAILS |  |            |  |
| Surname                |  | First Name |  |
| Relationship to child  |  |            |  |

| DETAILS OF REQUEST FOR LEAVE  |  |                          |  |
|---|--|--------------------------|--|
| Date of Departure   |  | Date of Return           |  |
| No. of School Days Absence  |  | Destination              |  |
| Local emergency contact name  |  | Emergency contact number |  |
| <p>Please provide details and reasons for requesting leave of absence and in particular any 'exceptional circumstances' If necessary, please provide any documentary evidence in support of your request.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> |  |                          |  |
| <p>I certify that the information provided on this form is correct. I understand that the School reserves the right to issue a penalty notice or remove my child from the school register for unauthorised leave.</p>   |  |                          |  |
| Signature   |  | Date                     |  |
| Address (if different to above)   |  |                          |  |
| Telephone no.   |  | Mobile no.               |  |
| Email   |  |                          |  |

**– FOR COMPLETION BY THE SCHOOL –**

|                           |          |          |  |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|--|
| Authorised                | YES / NO |          |  |
| Exceptional Circumstances |          |          |  |
| Signature                 |          | Date     |  |
| Name                      |          | Position |  |