

Fulbridge Academy



Pupil Attendance Policy

Date approved:	Nov 2017
Date reviewed:	September 2020
Date of next review:	September 2021

Rationale

Fulbridge Academy wishes to ensure that all children within the Academy benefit from the educational opportunities provided in order that they may reach their maximum potential.

To achieve this aim the Academy will endeavour to offer quality support to young people and their families. The Academy believes that children and young people are individuals in their own right and of equal worth, whatever their race, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation or social background. It also, however, recognises that those youngsters with Special Educational Needs and families which are socially disadvantaged, may, at times, require positive discrimination.

The school is committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies in order to achieve the best outcomes for children. It supports the Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Positive Contribution and Economic Well Being aims of the Every Child Matters agenda. In this light we see attendance at the Academy to be vitally important and in the best interests of the child. When it is clear that support has been unsuccessful, in the interest of the child consideration will be given to the use of legal action.

The Academy has a legal obligation to publish its attendance/absence figures and to promote attendance. Absence from the Academy has to be classified by the Academy as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Parents/carers of registered pupils have a legal duty to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend the Academy on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from Academy is an offence.

Fulbridge Academy has adopted a Penalty Notice Protocol in respect of unauthorised periods of leave. It is now possible that in certain cases of unauthorised absence a penalty notice may be issued to the parent(s)/carer(s) responsible. Under these provisions a penalty of £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt will be issued. Non-payment of any such penalty will result in prosecution for non-school attendance under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996. A penalty notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each individual child.

Academy staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are in the front line of the drive to improve attendance. Teachers and others who work in the Academy are in daily contact with pupils and can forge effective links with parents at a local level. It is essential that all staff promote good attendance.

Academy Procedures

A designated member of the Senior Management Team is responsible for the setting and regular review of targets for the whole Academy, year/class groups and individual pupils.

Registration

Fulbridge Academy applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Registers will be kept in accordance with government regulations and are legal documents which record whether parents/carers have fulfilled their obligations and may be produced as evidence for an offence. They must therefore be kept correctly.
- Registration closes at 8.50 am. Any child arriving after this time will be recorded as a 'late arrival'. The registers will be kept open for a further 10 minutes. Pupils arriving after this period will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

Illness and other legitimate reasons

- If a child is unfit to attend, parents should contact the Academy on 01733 566990 by 9.30 am on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day taken. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness, such as a doctor's note, may be requested. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time; notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. Authorised absence will be considered in respect of certain emergencies.
- The Academy will operate a First Day Contact system whereby the parents/carers of pupils who are absent and have failed to contact the Academy will be contacted and asked for the reason for absence. If parents/carers do not give a suitable reason for absence, following a phone call and letter from the Academy, the absence is recorded as unauthorised. Please note it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to first contact the school as detailed above.

Attendance

General information on statistics relating to attendance/absences will be given to parents/carers on the school website and in newsletters. This will highlight the importance of being at school on time and of notifying the school if their child is absent for any reason.

- The Academy may inform parents/carers that 92% attendance or below of any individual pupil is a worry, and may result in a letter home.
- 90% or below is very worrying and may result in a letter home requesting the parent/carer to attend a meeting at the Academy.
- 80% or below is a serious concern; and parents/carers will be called to a School Attendance Meeting (SAM). Non-attendance at this level may result in prosecution.

Academy staff will work with pupils, parents and other agencies to resolve Academy related issues, which are impacting on a pupil's attendance. All pupils are expected to have 100% attendance, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence, which would then be recorded as an authorised absence.

The Academy will support, sensitively, the re-integration of pupils after an absence and give access to counselling or mentoring services as appropriate.

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean attendance in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are the days and timings that the school is open for pupils to attend. Under this judgement a child should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Periods of Absences and Holidays

All holiday leave during term-time is solely at the discretion of the Principal of the Academy. There is no automatic entitlement to holiday leave during term-time. Fulbridge Academy believes additional periods of absence and holidays during term-time are very disruptive to a child's education.

In line with the amended education regulations 2013, with effect from 1st September 2013, NO request for term time leave of absence (including holidays and extended leave) will be authorised, unless deemed as exceptional by the Principal.

A Fulbridge Academy leave of absence request form must be completed by ALL families before any leave of absence is taken. There will be no exception to the above policy.

The Academy will respond to requests for leave of absence as follows:

In exceptional circumstances where the Principal has granted a request, the Academy will send written confirmation to the parent/carer.

If leave is not granted and the child is subsequently absent from school then this period will be classified as unauthorised absence. A Penalty Notice may be issued.

The parent/carer must make the request for leave of absence even if they are not accompanying the child eg if the child is to be accompanied by an estranged partner or grandparents.

Deletion from the Admission Register

Head teachers and parents are not free simply to remove children of compulsory age from Admission or Attendance Registers. Doing so means that they are no longer a 'registered pupil' and the child may no longer be being 'properly educated' as the law requires. The most common situations in which children's names may be deleted are:

- When the child 'has been registered at another school' Children should not therefore be removed from the register on a 'promise' by parents, only when the Academy is informed by another school that they have actually admitted the child (or after 4 weeks if the child has

moved away from their last known address but no subsequent school has been in contact).

- When the parent has given written notification to the Academy that they are educating the child 'otherwise' than at the Academy. Once notification is received it is forwarded to the Local Authority.
- When the child has stopped attending and no longer 'ordinarily resides' at a place which is a reasonable distance from the current school.
- After four weeks continuous absence and after the Academy has failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil.
- At the end of the process of any permanent exclusion (i.e. not until all appropriate representations have been made, not from the day of the exclusion).

Children should be at the Academy on time, every day that the Academy is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from the Academy without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer.