



Attendance Policy

2023 - 2024

1. Aims

The Fitzroy Academy aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every learner has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of concerning absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also support parents, carers, social workers and guardians to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Many of our learners have experienced difficulties with school attendance in the past and may need considerable support to develop good attendance.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Learner Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Learner Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Learner Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Learner Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Learner Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all learners are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all learners must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every learner is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

The amended entry (editing tracks)

The reason for the amendment

The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the Schoolpod codes used at The Fitzroy Academy

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for at least 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Learners must arrive in school by 9.30am on each school day. The register for the first session will be kept open until 9.45am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.30pm and will be kept open until 1.45pm

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents, carers, social workers or guardians must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.45am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). They should do this by phoning the school reception.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents, carers, social workers or guardians to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents carers, social workers or guardians will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

Parents/Carers are to request absence for their child prior to any appointments by calling the school administration team on 01939 210040 and emailing the Head Teacher via Lydia.swinton@newreflexions.co.uk

However, we encourage parents, carers, social workers or guardians to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the learner should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A learner who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A learner who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

If pupils are late on a regular basis initially a phone call home will be made to discuss concerns and what level of support can be provided to the family. If lateness persists a meeting will be held with both pupil and parents/carers to discuss any issues that may be causing the lateness and to agree a plan moving forward to prevent it. Once agreed the plan will be reviewed weekly to check it is effective, if issues persist then a further meeting will be arranged to agree next steps.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

The school will do this by:

- Calling the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. (If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will send a member of staff to the family home to make contact. In the event that contact is not made and the school has good reason to believe that there is reason for concern, then the police will be contacted.)
- Identifying whether the absence is approved or not
- Identifying the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Calling the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school registration system on Schoolpod can provide a wealth of attendance information which will be fed into appropriate meetings as required. Attendance information will also be provided in all school reports and a full attendance certificate provided within the learner's annual school report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to learners during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a one-off family event such as a wedding or activities required in relation to Looked After Children such as statutory visits if they cannot be accommodated in any other way.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the learner's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Traveller learners travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school. To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes, it is expected that the pupil should attend school elsewhere when their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school.

A study leave code may be used in the secondary school to reflect time spent on a leavers programme encompassing activities and visits which prepare our learners for their next step.

4.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Fitzroy Academy recognises the effort that goes into maintaining a good attendance record and will celebrate attendance achievements of its learners as well as promoting the importance of developing a good attendance record.

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

(Taken from Working Together to Improve Attendance – DfE March 2024)

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school administrator monitors learner absence on a daily basis, alerting the Head Teacher to any students who are not present.

Parents, carers, social workers or guardians are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

The school does not have a stated absence threshold because all absence is of concern and will be responded to in a way that is appropriate to the individual learner and their family or care environment.

The Fitzroy Academy collects attendance and absence data and may use this for internal purposes to track and monitor learners.

6.2 Analysing attendance

Here at the Fitzroy Academy we analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

We look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies in partnership with parents/carer to address these patterns and any barriers to attendance.

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families. Data will also be used to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

As a school we will use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence. When a pattern of persistent absence is spotted, the school will look to work with the family/carers to support improving attendance. The initial correspondence regarding concerns will be via a letter and a phone call home to discuss concerns. If attendance does not improve a meeting will be held with pupils (if appropriate to developmental needs) and parents/carers to help understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them. An attendance improvement action plan with measurable outcomes will be drawn up and agreed with parents/carers and the pupil (if appropriate). Action plans will be reviewed weekly over the course of the plan, to ensure progress regarding the improvement of attendance.

7. Roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Proprietorial Board

The director of education is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the director of education
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Headteacher.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Learner is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Learner is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Learner arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Learner is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Learner is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Learner has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Learner is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Learner is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Learner is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Learner has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Learner has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Learner has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a learner will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Learner is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Learner is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 learner is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Learner from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Learner is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Learner is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for learner's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Learner arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Learner of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or learner is in custody
Z	Learner not on admission register	Register set up but learner has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Approved by: Headteacher

Last reviewed on: August 2023

Next review due by: August 2024