Attendance

Policy into practice

1. Aims

This document sets out how Fishtoft Academy manages pupil attendance, in line with the **Voyage Education Partnership Trust Attendance Policy**.

We recognise that regular attendance is essential to your child's progress and wellbeing. If you need any help or advice about attendance, please contact Dr Craig Early/Mrs Danielle Gray.

2. Attendance Expectations

We expect all pupils to attend school **100% of the academic year**.

You can support your child's attendance by:

- Making sure they arrive on time every day (by **8:45am**).
- Avoiding term-time holidays.
- Sending your child in if they are only mildly unwell, staff will monitor them.
- Booking medical appointments outside of school hours where possible.
- Providing proof of appointments if they fall during school hours.
- Contacting the school early if your child is anxious or reluctant to attend.

3. Understanding Absence

Definition

A child is marked **absent** if:

- They are not in school for any reason.
- They arrive after the register has closed.

Authorised Absence

Absence may be authorised for:

- Illness (with explanation),
- Unavoidable medical appointments,
- Recognised religious events,
- Exceptional family circumstances (approved in advance).

Unauthorised Absence

Absence will be unauthorised when:

- No explanation is given,
- The reason is not accepted,
- The child is late after registers close,

- The absence is for avoidable reasons (e.g. holidays, shopping, birthdays, medical appointments abroad).

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in referral to the **Local Authority**.

4. Absence Levels – Why They Matter

- **Persistent Absence (PA):** Attendance below 90% (~19 days missed).
- **At Risk of PA:** Attendance between 90.1%–93%.
- **Severe Absence (SA):** Attendance below 50% (~90+ days missed).

Any of the above levels will lead to support from school, and if needed, the Local Authority.

5. Promoting Good Attendance

At Fishtoft Academy, we firmly believe that openness and collaboration are the key to success. We set a culture of high expectations for all of our school community and firmly believe that in order for children to achieve well they need to be in school. We understand that there are a variety of scenarios that can affect a child's attendance, which is why our approach is built upon support, understanding and transparency. We will always look to engage with families to understand how we can help as a school and that, as families, you understand the full process beyond what we as a school manage and why discussions/presenting of evidence is required. Together we can ensure that your child attends school and has the best possible start in their educational journey!

6. Attendance Register

Register Times

Morning Registers open at 8:35am and close at 8:50am

Afternoon Registers Open at 12:55pm and close at 1:05pm

Initial Markings

- `/` = Present AM
- `\` = Present PM
- `N` = Absent (no reason yet)

The admin team will follow up with appropriate absence codes. *(See full code list in your school's staff handbook or Trust policy.)*

If no reason is provided, we will:

- Call all available contacts,
- Send a text or email,
- Possibly conduct a home visit.

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
C	Pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. e.g. film shoot
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
I	Illness (NOT appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence - Parent travelling for occupational purposes
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration, not remote learning, must be supervised learning))
P	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip (supervised by a member of school staff)
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
D	Dual registered (at another establishment - NOT counted in attendance)
X	Not required to be in school - for non-compulsory school age children
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in attendances
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in attendances
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Where there is no known reason, administrators will take reasonable steps to ascertain the whereabouts of pupils. This will include phoning all available contacts, sending a text/communicating through the academy (MYEd) and/or sending an email.

Once these steps have been followed and if no contact can be made, the child will continue to be recorded as 'N'. In addition, the academy may decide, at their discretion, to make an unannounced home visit to the learner's listed address. If there is no answer, a calling card will be left asking parents/carers to contact the academy as soon as possible.

Where no reason is provided for an absence, the academy may send a letter to the home address to request a reason for the absence and further enquiries may be required. See the Trust Attendance Policy for more information on home visits.

7. Types of Absences

a. Medical Appointments

- Should be outside school hours where possible.
- Provide evidence (e.g. appointment card).
- Pupils should attend before/after the appointment.

b. Religious Observance

- Inform the school in advance.
- Requests considered on a case-by-case basis.

c. Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Pupils

Absence can be authorised if:

- The family is travelling for work,
- The child has attended at least 200 sessions in the past year.

d. Exclusions

- Count as authorised absences.

e. Term-Time Leave/Holidays

- Only approved in *exceptional* circumstances.
- Must be requested **at least two weeks in advance**.
- Unauthorised leave may lead to a **Penalty Notice** or prosecution.

Each case is considered individually. The Headteacher's decision is final.

Unauthorised leave may result in a penalty notice or prosecution. If leave is approved, a return date will be set. Failure to return without contact may trigger Children Missing Education procedures.

8. Responding to Poor Attendance

a. Learners who arrive late

Punctuality is of the utmost importance, and lateness will not be tolerated. The academy gates are open at 8:35am and we expect all learners to be in class at the start of the school day at 8:45am, registers are marked at this time.

The school gates will be locked at 8:45am. If a learner arrives at the academy after **8:45am** and before **9:15am** they will be recorded as late (L). Any Learner arriving at school after **8:45am** when the gates are locked will be required to report to the school office who will sign the child into school and request a reason for late arrival.

Attendance after the registers close at **9:15am** will receive an unauthorised late mark (U) to show that they are on site, but this will count as an absent mark. Learners who are absent before they come into the academy due to medical appointment, must provide evidence of the appointment either before the appointment or as soon as they return after the appointment.

A letter will be sent informing parents/carers of learners who are regularly late that this is not acceptable and in extreme cases, where no improvement has been made, this may mean that parents/carers could be invited to attend a meeting which may involve the Education Welfare Officer.

b. Communication with Parents

We may contact you at any time, either in person at the start or end of the school day, or by telephone, to discuss concerns regarding your child's lateness or absence. At the end of each term, standard letters are issued to all parents/carers whose child's attendance has fallen below expected levels.

c. School Attendance Support First Approach

When the academy has concerns about the attendance level of a learner, they will invite the parent(s)/carers into school to discuss the issues surrounding the poor attendance.

The meeting will be held by the academy which may involve the academy Attendance Officer and Attendance Champion and/or the Trust Educational Welfare Officer, depending on the level of support needed.

During this meeting an action plan will be created, and this will be shared with parents/carers. A target for the learner's attendance and a review date will be set. Additional support will be explored which may include an Early Help Assessment, referrals to additional supportive services and individual support for the learner and family.

It may also be appropriate to draw up an attendance contract with parents where there fails to be improvement in attendance after support has been offered.

d. Home visits

Sometimes, we may carry out a home visit to help improve your child's attendance. These visits are friendly and supportive—not a punishment.

We may visit to:

- Talk through any challenges (like illness or worries) affecting your child's attendance.
- Check your child is safe if we haven't heard from you after an absence.
- Rebuild contact if it's been hard to stay in touch.
- Offer support or signpost you to help if needed.
- Support a return to school after a long absence.

Our aim is always to work with you in a respectful and helpful way so your child can get the most out of school.

e. Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Some learners can develop severe anxiety about coming to school and will avoid coming. Their attendance can start to decline significantly and suddenly. In order to support learners with these needs, the academy is able to access support from a variety of professionals who are experts in this fields.

If parents/ carers are concerned that their child may be experiencing this, they should contact the academy at their earliest possible opportunity. The earlier a child is supported the better the outcomes are for them.

f. Local Authority Involvement

Pupil Not Attending Regularly (PNAR) - Where a learner has missed 10 consecutive days of learning, the academy will inform the Local Authority.

Sickness Notification - If a child accumulates 30 sessions (15 days) of absence due to illness (I code), the academy will inform the Local Authority. The absences can either be continuous or cumulative.

Legal Action

Where there is little or no improvement in a learner's attendance despite supportive measures being offered, the academy will consider referring the matter to the local authority who have the power to issues further sanctions such as Penalty Notices and prosecutions in the court arena.

Non school attendance includes any day when a child should attend school, and they are absent without the authorisation of the school, this includes:

1. When a child is persistently absent, where attendance is 90% or below. This also includes lateness after the close of register where the U code is being used.

2. Where a child is present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of an exclusion.

3. Unauthorised holiday during term time.

Local councils and academies/schools can use various legal powers if your child is missing school without a good reason. They can give you:

- a Parenting Order
- an Education Supervision Order
- a School Attendance Order
- a fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice'). You could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court could also give you a Parenting Order. See below for more information:

Penalty Notice	Details
First Notice in a 3 year period:	Issued to each parent. Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days. £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second Notice in a 3 year period:	Issued to each parent. Charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
Third Notice in a 3 year period:	Alternative action should be taken, for example prosecution or other attendance legal interventions. Fines per parent are capped at two within any three-year period. If a parent is prosecuted for their child's non-attendance, they could face a fine of up to £2,500.

Leavers

Pupils may leave the academy for various reasons, including:

- Relocation making travel to the academy impractical
- Moving abroad
- Parental choice to change schools
- A change required to meet the pupil's educational needs
- Reassignment of service personnel
- Parental choice to education from home

To process a withdrawal, parents/carers must complete a leavers form. This provides the information needed to remove a pupil from the admissions register.

If full details or confirmation from the new school are not provided, the academy is required to report the pupil as a Child Missing in Education (CME). Please refer to the Trust's CME Policy for more information.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

It is a parent's right to home educate their child if that is what they wish. The local authority must make arrangements to find out so far as possible whether home educated children are receiving suitable full-time education.

If parents/ carers are considering home educating their child/children we would encourage families to first discuss this with the academy.

A meeting will be offered to discuss the parents/carers options.

Confirmation will then need to be given in writing by parents/ carers of the intention to home educate.

The Local Authority will then make arrangements to visit parents to check on the quality of the education.

Further information can be found on the Lincolnshire County Council Website