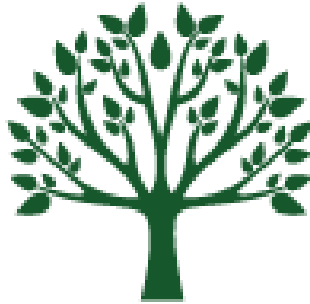


# ATTENDANCE POLICY



**FAIRFIELD**  
HIGH SCHOOL

<b>Approved by:</b>	Trust Board	March 2026
<b>Signed by:</b>	Chair of Trustees	March 2026
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# Attendance Policy

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## 1. Introduction

At Fairfield High School, regular attendance at school is essential for every student to achieve their full potential. This policy outlines expectations, procedures, and responsibilities for ensuring excellent levels of attendance and punctuality across the school.

## 2. Our Aim:

- To promote excellent attendance and reduce absence.
- To ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- To identify and address patterns of poor attendance promptly.
- To work in partnership with parents, carers, and external agencies including Herefordshire Council to support high levels of attendance.

## 3. Expectations

### 3.1 Students

- Attend school every day unless ill or otherwise authorised.
- Be Punctual; School starts at 08:45AM
- Sign in at the school office if you arrive after 08:45AM
- Inform Form Tutor or Student Support Services if there are barriers to attending school.
- Engage in support and Interventions provided by the school to encourage and maintain their attendance.

## 3.2 Parents and Carers

**The Education Act 1996 states that parents and carers are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.**

The school expects parents and carers to ensure that they:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Support their children's attendance by avoiding term time leave.
- Regularly keep the school updated with any changes to contact details.
- Contact the school on any day of absence, providing a clear reason, this can be either a phone call to the Attendance office 01981 550 006 or emailing our attendance email: [attendance@fairfield.hereford.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@fairfield.hereford.sch.uk)
- Be cooperative to collaborate with the school to resolve any concerns affecting attendance, for example, by attending parents' meetings.

## 3.3 School

- Monitor attendance daily.
- Follow up absences. Inc 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> day absences
- Support our students and families to improve attendance where needed.
- Celebrate and promote good attendance.

# 4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

## 4.1 Authorised Absence

Where the school has received and accepted a legitimate explanation for a student to not being at school.

## 4.2 Unauthorised Absence

Absences will be unauthorised when:

- No reason is provided for absences.
- The reason provided is not considered acceptable by the school
- Leave from school is taken without approval (including holidays during term time)

### 4.3 Types of Absence

- **Illness** - If your child has an accident, illness or medical condition, contact the school as soon as you can, please see, the: [Is my child too ill for school NHS advice](#) to help you decide whether they can go to school.
- **Medical Appointments** – We encourage all medical appointments to be arranged out of school hours. If this cannot be successfully arranged, then proof of appointment will need to be seen by the school to authorize any absences. We expect all students to attend school either before or after the appointment – to only be absent for the duration of the intended appointment. Proof can include Dr’s note, Appointment letters and cards which can be brought in or emailed to [attendance@fairfield.hereford.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@fairfield.hereford.sch.uk)
- **Truancy within school** – Detentions will be given for persistent lateness or truancy from lessons; or Isolation if considered a suitable sanction.

### 4.4 Term time Absence

The Headteacher cannot authorize term time absences unless there are considered exceptional circumstances. Whilst Exceptional circumstances can be considered subjective, we will **not grant term time holidays, regardless of cost or unsatisfactory dates.**

- A Term time request form for leave must be submitted no sooner than two weeks in advance, and the Head teacher must be satisfied that there are *truly exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case.*
- Where a leave of absence is granted, the Head teacher can decide the number of days a student can be away from school.
- A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher’s discretion.

If the Head teacher does not authorize the absence and parents or carers still choose to take the leave this will then be considered unauthorized absence. **As a result, a referral may be sent to Herefordshire Council, who may issue a Penalty Notice; (Please see below - 9)**

Our Term Time request form can be found on our website:

[www.fairfield.hereford.sch.uk](http://www.fairfield.hereford.sch.uk)

### 4.5 Long Term Absence

*A student is considered persistently absent when their attendance is 90% attendance or below.*

We will work with families to provide support and may involve external agencies.

- **Children with absences due to medical needs**

Schools are legally required to notify Herefordshire Council where students are coded I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe they will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

In cases where a student has been out of school for 15 days or more for the same condition, and who has evidence from an appropriate health care official stating the student is unable to access school despite any support that has been put in place, a referral should be made to the Inclusion and Engagement Panel. The panel will review whether the provision of education should remain with the school or whether section 19 funded provision should be implemented.

- **Children Missing in Education -CMIE**

*Children with attendance of 50% and below are considered Severely Absent*

As part of our aim to help further support our students that are missing a considerable amount of education by not attending school and their attendance is still below 50% and not improving, we will refer a student's case to the CMIE panel at Herefordshire Council.

- **Children missing Education**

When a student is removed from the school roll and no satisfactory correspondence has been provided regarding their new educational placement—and parents or carers cannot be contacted—the school has a duty of care to report any safeguarding concerns to the Herefordshire Council. In such circumstances, the student will be classified as 'Missing in Education.'

Herefordshire Council has a legal responsibility to investigate these cases, which may involve liaising with Social Services and the Police to establish the student's whereabouts and confirm their new placement details.

To prevent unnecessary investigations, we expect parents and carers of students who are leaving the school to promptly inform us of the student's new placement and updated contact information.

## 5. Procedures

### 5.1 Reporting Absence

- Parents/carers must notify the school with a genuine reason **by 9:00am** on any day of absence. Please give a detailed explanation, as an unsatisfactory reason will be coded as unauthorized. We may contact you further to discuss the nature of the absence.
- Medical evidence may be requested for repeated or extended absences.

## 5.2 Monitoring and Follow-Up

Attendance is monitored daily and weekly.

Concerns will prompt contact from the school, which may include:

- Phone calls
- Letters
- Meetings with parents/carers

We will refer to Herefordshire Council if there are ten or more unauthorized sessions missed, this equates to five school days as there are two sessions per day.

Continued unauthorized absences will also be referred to the Herefordshire Council

## 6. Punctuality

- Students are expected to arrive on time each day.
- Repeated lateness will be monitored, and letters of concern will be sent to parents/carers. Detentions will be issued if no improvements are made.

## 7. Rewards for Good Attendance

- Certificates, recognition in assemblies, and other incentives may be used to celebrate excellent attendance.

## 8. Responsibilities

Parents and carers commit an offence if they do not ensure the regular attendance of their child, of compulsory school age, at the school where they are registered—unless the absence has been authorized by the school. This obligation has become even more significant following the introduction of the Working Together to Improve School Attendance (WTTISA) guidance in August 2024. The WTTISA guidance clearly states that parents and carers have a legal responsibility to support and maintain good school attendance.

In line with WTTISA, the school employs a range of strategies to promote and sustain elevated levels of attendance. We regularly praise students for excellent attendance and for showing clear and sustained improvement. We are committed to supporting students and their families by offering guidance and assistance aimed at improving attendance.

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

However, where attendance does not improve despite these efforts, the school may issue a Notice to Improve to reinforce the importance of regular attendance. If there is still no further improvement, we may seek advice from Herefordshire Council, which may result in the issuance of penalty notices. (Please see Notice to Improve below)

## 9. Penalty Notices

Penalty notices must be issued in accordance with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, and may only be issued by Herefordshire Council following a formal referral from the headteacher or an authorised representative.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will carefully consider each individual case. This includes assessing whether the national threshold has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10week period), determining whether a penalty notice is the most effective measure to improve the student's attendance, and evaluating whether further support, a Notice to Improve, or another form of legal intervention would be more appropriate.

The school will also consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 when deciding whether issuing a penalty notice is suitable and proportionate in each case.

Each Parent/Carer who is liable for the student's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice. The payment must be made directly to the Herefordshire Council. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Herefordshire Council can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The school must have notified the parents of the days the student must not be present in a public place. This type of penalty notice is not included in the National Framework and therefore not subject to the same considerations about support being provided or count towards the limit as part of the escalation process in the case of repeat offences for non-attendance. These penalty notices are charged at £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

- **A first penalty notice** issued to a parent in respect of a particular student will be charged £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- **A second penalty notice** issued to the same parent in respect of the same student is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- **A third penalty notice** cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions such as an Education Supervision Order.

### 9.1 Notice to Improve

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and

support is appropriate, but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support.

A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and an authorized officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioral impact (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence).

**Where a Notice to Improve is used, it should be issued in line with processes set out in the Local Code of Conduct for the Herefordshire Council area in which the student attends school.**

. The Notice to Improve is expected to include:

- Details of the student's attendance record and details of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support and the possibility to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
  - A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.
  - A clear time frame for the improvement period between 3 and 6 weeks.
  - Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like.
  - The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

[Attendance information for schools - Herefordshire Council](#)

## 10. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.