



The Fernwood School

High Achievement with Care & Discipline for All"

Attendance Policy

This policy will be monitored regularly and evaluated so that it remains responsive to current issues. This will be co-ordinated by the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral).

Approved: March 2023
Next review: March 2026
Status: Non-Statutory



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Principles/Aims

The Fernwood School is committed to providing the best pastoral care and support with academic progress for every student in its care, in line with our mission statement; "High Achievement with Care and Discipline for All". We recognise that there is a direct correlation between high attendance and positive engagement across *all aspects of school life*. The school is committed to working with **all** students, parents, and other relevant bodies, to ensure that all students attend school regularly to maximise their successes and support continued whole school improvement.

All schools and parents have statutory duties with respect to attendance. At The Fernwood School, we have established effective systems to monitor attendance by working in partnership with students, parents, and other relevant bodies to maintain excellent overall attendance and reduce persistent absence. Promoting excellent attendance and behaviour is the responsibility of the whole Fernwood School community.

All children should be at The Fernwood School, on time, every day, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any problems or issues that arise with attendance are most effectively resolved between The Fernwood School, parents/carers and the student. Permitting absence from The Fernwood School without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer.

The attendance policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of students. We have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more, where The Fernwood School is unable to make contact with the parent/carer/child or have general concerns about the absence, to the Education Welfare Service.

At The Fernwood School, The Assistant Headteachers who line manage the Pastoral Team Leaders (PTLs) have strategic responsibility for monitoring attendance together with the Pupils and Pastoral Officer (who provides administrative support for attendance, first day contact and communications/queries regarding attendance from parents). The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) has oversight of all year groups and works closely with these colleagues on a week-to-week basis, ensuring that attendance and punctuality issues are on the agenda at relevant meetings (namely KS3/4 PTL meetings where cases are discussed twice each half term and at Joint Middle Leader meetings where strategies and interventions may be discussed to ensure uniformity of approach and consistent follow up).

Taking the Register

The Fernwood School is required to take an attendance register twice a day and this shows whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site or absent. If a student is absent, it is classified as either *authorised* or *unauthorised* and recorded as either a morning or an afternoon session. **The school authorises absences, not the parents/carers.** Therefore, the information about the cause of each absence is always required either in writing, message on the absence line or a text sent from the parents' mobile phone. Absences would be authorised for reasons such as illness or other unavoidable causes. Unauthorised absences are those which The Fernwood School does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. These may include:



- ✿ Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- ✿ Truancy
- ✿ Absences with no adequate explanation
- ✿ Caring for other members of the family
- ✿ Arriving to school too late to get a mark for the morning session
- ✿ Any holidays taken in term time with or without prior agreement of the Headteacher
- ✿ Any other leave of absence taken without prior agreement from the Headteacher that may not be considered under exceptional circumstances.

Punctuality

Students attending The Fernwood School are expected to arrive on time, as it provides a good start to the day and is an essential skill for the world of work and further study. **Any student who arrives after 8.30am is late and will receive a detention.**

- ✿ If a student is late to a lesson, they will receive C1/15-minute detention with the class teacher.
- ✿ If a student is late to Tutor time (8.30am) they will receive a C1/15-minute detention at break time on the same day, with the Deputy Headteacher and a member of the pastoral team. If a student does not attend this breaktime detention, they will be required to attend at the end of the day (3.00pm or 3.10pm depending on key stage) for 30 minutes – a text will be sent in advance to parents.

PTLs will contact parents/carers of any student who is persistently late in order to work collaboratively to resolve the issue/problem. A letter may also be sent for persistent lateness and parents requested to attend a meeting in school. A referral may also be made to the Education Welfare Service if there is no significant, sustained improvement.

Penalty Notices

The Local Authority holds statutory powers under the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children attend school. If they cannot successfully engage with the family to achieve this, they may use one of the many statutory powers to enforce the parents'/carers' responsibility regarding their child's school attendance.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, amended Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, allows parents to be issued with a penalty where they have failed to ensure their child of compulsory school age (5-16) attends school.

A penalty notice is initially £60 for each parent and for each child. If this £60 is not paid within 21 days from the date of issue it increases to £120 for each parent and each child. If after 28 days of the date of issue the £120 is not paid, the Local Authority will prosecute the parents under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This will lead to a hearing in the Magistrates' Court and may result in a fine of up to £1,000 per parent.

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties are encouraged to contact The Fernwood School at an early stage and work together with staff in resolving any problems/barriers. It is our



experience that this is almost always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, The Fernwood School or the parent/carer may refer the child to the Education Welfare Services (EWS). EWS colleagues will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed. The officers can issue penalty notices or pursue court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWS themselves to ask for help or information. They are a service which is independent of The Fernwood School and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from The Fernwood School reception or by contacting the Local Education Authority. The school may authorise up to 1 day leave for Eid, which is recorded for register purposes as 'Religious Observance'.

Procedures

(See appendices 1 and 2 for attendance/absence monitoring flow charts, whole school/off site provision)

The Fernwood School applies the following procedures in dealing with individual absences:

- ❧ **Leave of absence during term time will not be granted. They may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher. All requests should be emailed directly to the Headteacher at headteacher@fernwood.school**
- ❧ Parents/carers are advised that students are expected to be in school every day. The importance of excellent attendance is communicated through written and oral communications with students and parents.
- ❧ Attendance is regularly reviewed, and letters may be sent out to parents/carers where their child is under 95%
- ❧ Attendance features highly in celebration/achievement assemblies to keep the profile of attendance high in school. The Pupils and Pastoral Officer may join the Pastoral Team Leader/PTL or Head of Key Stage in assemblies to reinforce key messages and expectations about attendance for students.
- ❧ The Fernwood School operates a PAR (pupil at risk) list for attendance which is reviewed and updated with actions/interventions regularly, in liaison with the relevant staff.
- ❧ Students who arrive late, after 8.45am, are expected to sign in at The Fernwood School reception giving reasons for their late arrival.
- ❧ If students have any periods of frequent lateness where there are no extenuating circumstances, a late letter will be sent to parents/carers, and this will be discussed with the student, Tutor, PTL and parent/carer in order to resolve the situation.
- ❧ Parents/carers are discouraged from making non urgent medical and dental appointments during school day.
- ❧ All absences through illness must be communicated via the absence line or by a telephone call to the Pupils and Pastoral Officer, or through Arbor communications explaining the nature of the illness.



- Attendance is rigorously monitored by the Pupils and Pastoral Officer and the Attendance Team, Assistant Headteachers (KS3 and 4), PTLs, Tutors and the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) who meets regularly with the Pupils and Pastoral Officer.
- In cases where attendance leads to a safeguarding concern, a log will be kept on CPOMS, the school's safeguarding portal.
- Unexplained absences will be rigorously followed up; the onus is on the parent to explain the reason for absence. When a reason is not provided, the Pupils and Pastoral Officer will pursue. If no reason is obtained, the absence is recorded as unauthorised.
- Where concerns about individual students occur, these are addressed with parents/carers through the Tutor and PTL in the first instance. If concerns about attendance persist, then The Fernwood School will involve other relevant bodies and the Education Welfare Service. Throughout this process, staff will look to identify and address reasons for attendance issues so that the student can return to school (with support if necessary) as quickly as possible.
- When an individual student's attendance level falls below 90% (*i.e., 10% unauthorised absence*) in any term without good reason, a referral to the EWS may be made. Following investigation, any unresolved issues could result in the parent/carer receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s444.

Persistent Absence (PA) < 90%

The Fernwood School is committed to reducing persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) and has specific procedures for dealing with this.

- PA data is monitored daily and weekly to track and review attendance of PA students so that concerns can be addressed straight away.
- The Pupils and Pastoral Officer or a member of the Attendance Team contact parents/carers of PA students as soon as they are absent.
- Regular meetings are held with the Pupils and Pastoral Officer, PTLs/SLT to discuss existing cases and any new concerns, deciding on action to be taken.
- Parents/carers, the child, the Tutor, class teachers, PTLs, SLT and EWS are all involved in speaking about concerns relating students with persistent absence.
- Actions/interventions are taken by The Fernwood School staff and the EWS in line with The Fernwood School/ LA policy.
- In addition to this the school also focuses on students who are at risk of being classed as Severe Absentees <50% and in these cases the school will work jointly with Fernwood's assigned Education Welfare Officer and an Attendance Improvement Plan will be agreed. (See Appendix 3)

Attendance Rewards

Rewards and sanctions will be used productively to encourage excellent attendance and punctuality. Excellent, good, and improving attendance will be celebrated in the termly and End of Year celebration assemblies. Examples of rewards for attendance are the following:



- ✿ Recognition and celebration via assemblies of those achieving 100% attendance and punctuality on an end of term and end of year basis.
- ✿ Positive Fernwood Award Points for excellent attendance.
- ✿ Fernwood Award Points for improved attendance/punctuality following on from Form Tutor/PTL/SLT report card for attendance/punctuality.

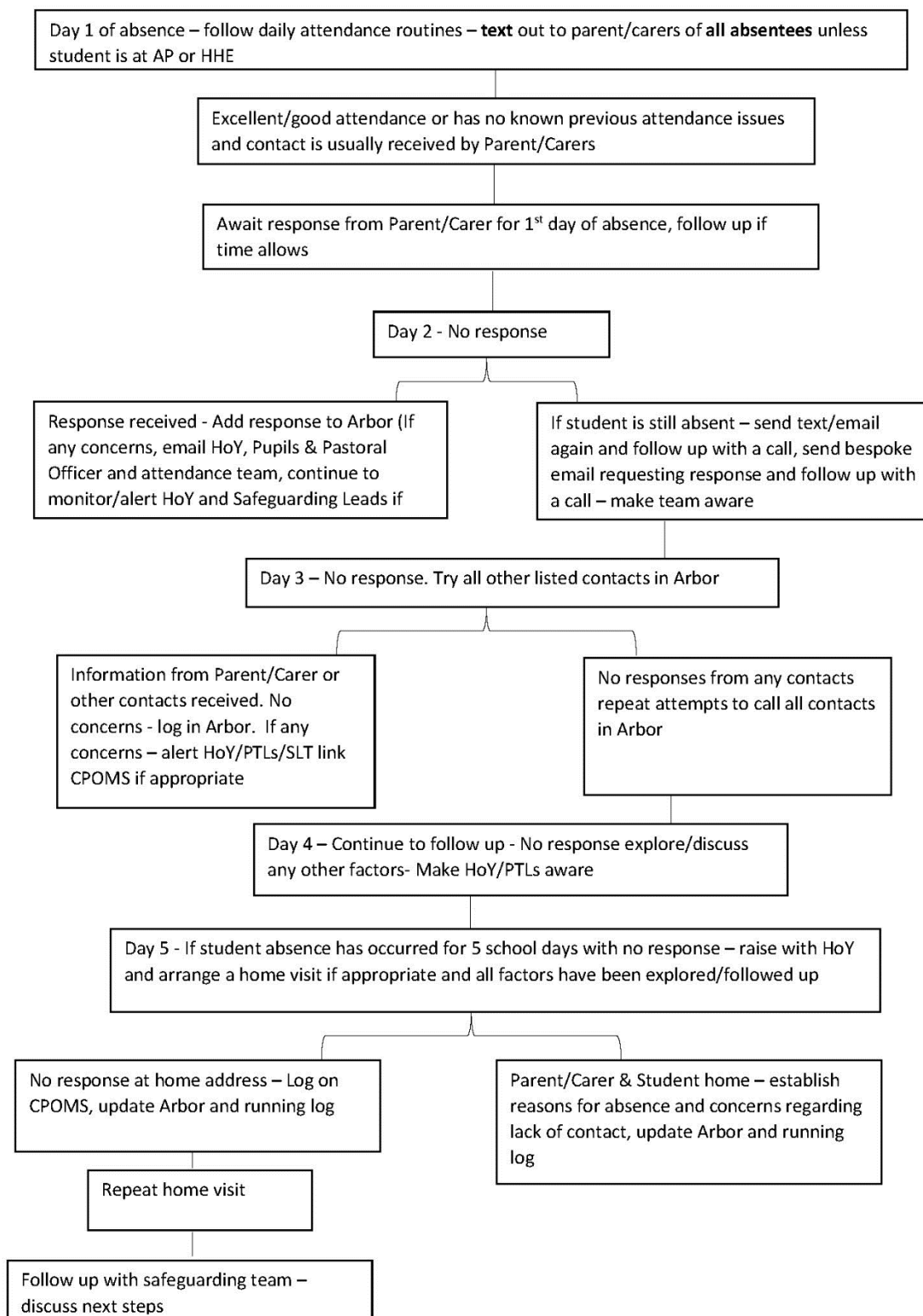
Working with other agencies

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated. The Fernwood School aims to work with the many support services to improve the outcomes for our students, including improving attendance. These services may include a school counsellor, support from Educational Psychologists, School Health, Social Care, Youth Justice Team, Police, CAMHS or BEMHS.



Appendix 1

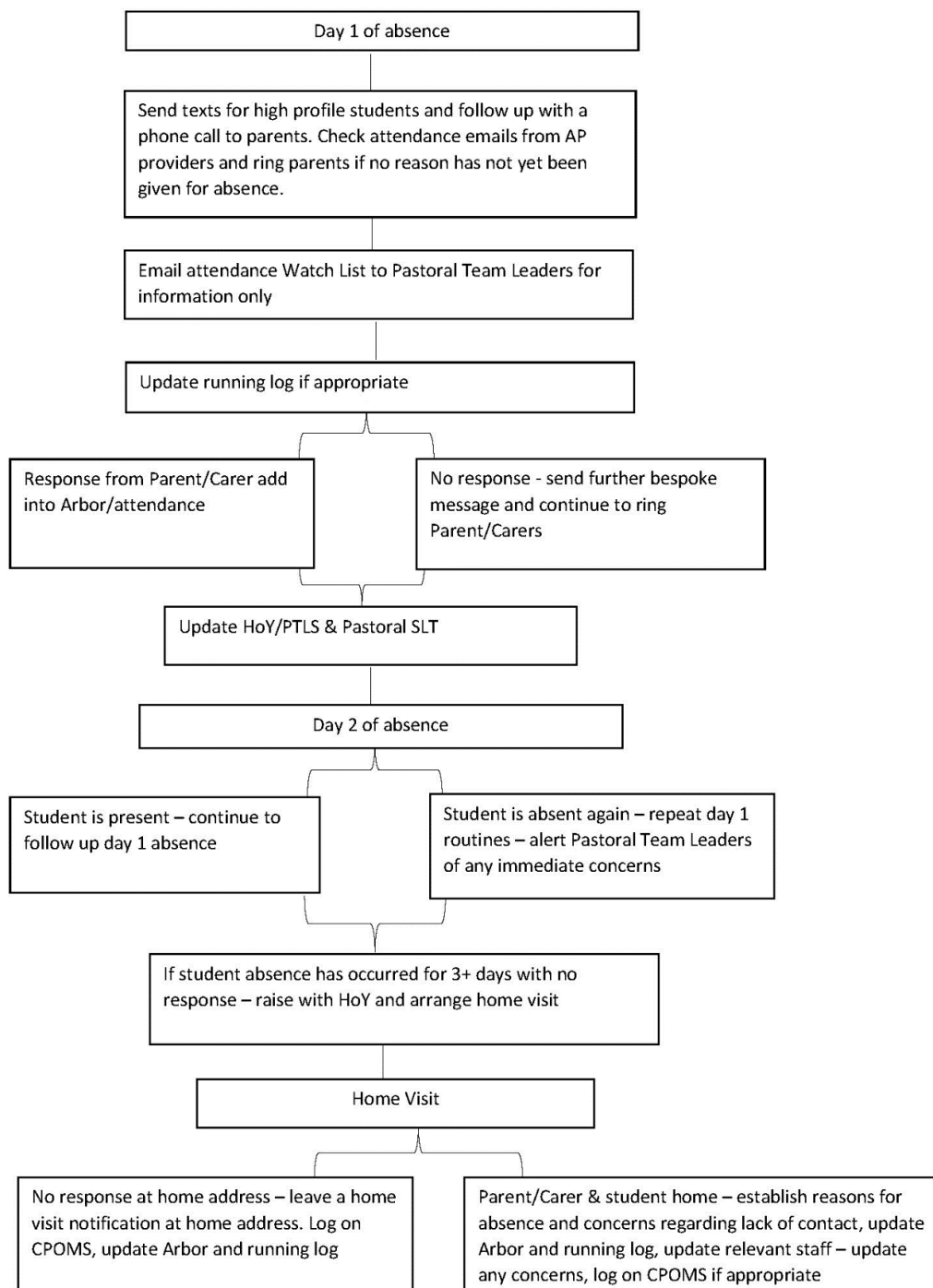
Student Absence Procedures/Routines





Appendix 2

Student Absence Procedures/Routines for AP/HHE High Profile Watchlist Students





Appendix 3

Attendance Improvement Plan

Pupil information	Pupil name	Date of birth	Age	Year
Present at meeting				
Purpose of document				
Current attendance percentage				
Known barriers to attendance				
Child's View (if appropriate)				
Parent's View				
School's View				
Agreed Actions				
Date of next review				



Pupil (if appropriate)

I confirm that I agree to the above attendance improvement plan and will:

- ☐ Attend school regularly in the correct uniform
- ☐ Arrive to school on time
- ☐ Attend and arrive on time to every lesson ready to learn
- ☐ Not leave the classroom or school premises without the permission a member of staff
- ☐ Complete all homework to the expected level and hand in on time
- ☐ Speak to a member of staff if I have any problems

Signed (Pupil) Date.....

Parent/Carer

I/we confirm that I/we have parental responsibility and agree to the above attendance improvement plan

I agree that I will...

- ☐ Ensure my child will attend school regularly
- ☐ Ensure they are wearing the correct uniform
- ☐ Ensure my child arrives to school on time
- ☐ Contact school at the earliest opportunity should my child be too ill to attend
- ☐ Ensure I update the relevant member of staff if there are any changes to my contact details
- ☐ Try where possible to make appointments outside of school hours or provide proof of the appointment when this is not possible and ensure my child attends before/after the appointment where possible.
- ☐ Contact the Attendance Officer if there are any problems or concerns
- ☐ Understand that my child's attendance will be monitored closely and reviewed regularly
- ☐ Understand that failure to comply with the above may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service which could lead to the issuing of a Penalty Notice or prosecution

Failing to ensure regular attendance at school may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice or prosecution. Penalty Notices are set at £60 if paid by 21 days and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Any legal proceedings would relate to section 444 or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

School

Staff member

- ☐ I/we agree to the above attendance improvement plan
- ☐ I/we will monitor attendance, which will be reviewed regularly
- ☐ If I/we have any concerns, I or someone on my behalf will contact you, the parent/carers immediately
- ☐ I/we will keep you informed of the result of any attendance reviews

Signed Date