# Fair Ways School
# Swanwick & Fort Wallington
# Attendance Policy

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# Fair Ways Vision, Mission and Values

**Our vision**
To build a community that changes lives, makes a difference to society and leaves a legacy greater than us and our contributions.

**Our mission**
To grow a compassionate, resilient, and trauma-informed community, that embraces learning, so that we improve the lives and outcomes of individuals.

**Our values**
Our values form the heart of the work we do, defined by Fair Ways people, for Fair Ways people. These are the values by which we operate, by which we are governed, and to which we are held accountable.

We therefore expect every individual within Fair Ways to *play their part*:

| **P**ROFESSIONAL | **A**CCEPTING | **R**EFLECTIVE | **T**RANSPARENT |
|---|---|---|---|
| · We do what we say we will.<br>· We approach challenges with optimism and enthusiasm.<br>· We don't judge, we notice.<br>· We put the needs of the service before our own personal gains. | · We don't give up on people.<br>· We value all individuals and are willing to challenge them.<br>· We embrace each other's differences as much as our similarities.<br>· We accept responsibility for our actions. | · We give feedback, we invite feedback, we listen to feedback.<br>· We look inward before we look outward.<br>· We learn as much from our mistakes as from our successes.<br>· We listen to each other, learn from each other and grow together. | · We are always willing to explain why.<br>· We have the courage to be open and honest.<br>· We earn trust through our transparency.<br>· We live by our values even when no-one is watching. |

# 1 School Attendance

1.1 This policy sets out Fair Ways School's approach to promoting good attendance, preventing avoidable absence, recording attendance accurately and responding to absence in line with the DfE statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance, the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and related safeguarding guidance.

1.2 Central to raising educational standards and ensuring that every student within Fair Ways Education can fulfil their potential is a simple, but essential principle: young people need to attend school regularly in order to benefit fully from their education.

1.3 Missing out on lessons and time at school leaves young people vulnerable to falling behind. Many of the young people who are on roll at Fair Ways have already missed substantial periods of time at school and it is Fair Ways' priority that all young people feel safe and comfortable in attending school on a regular and consistent basis.

1.4 Fair Ways School will promote a whole-school culture in which attendance is understood as everyone's responsibility. The school will work with students, parents and carers, placing authorities and relevant partners to identify barriers to attendance early and provide support before concerns become persistent or severe.

1.5 School leaders will ensure staff understand attendance responsibilities, receive appropriate guidance or training, and know when absence may indicate a safeguarding, SEND, mental health, medical or welfare concern requiring further action.

# 2 The Admission and Attendance Register

2.1 The law requires schools in England, including independent schools, to maintain electronic admission and attendance registers in accordance with the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, which came into force on 19 August 2024.

2.2 Admission Register – this document contains the personal details of all students in the school, along with the date of admission, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

2.3 Attendance Register – the school takes an attendance register on a daily basis using information gathered by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The administrators record whether a student is present, or the reason for non-attendance. All absences are followed up to ascertain a reason, ensure the correct safeguarding action is taken, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct code.

2.4 Fair Ways School will use the prescribed national attendance and absence codes set out in the current statutory guidance, Working together to improve school attendance, to ensure attendance is recorded consistently, accurately and in line with statutory expectations. Attendance coding will support safeguarding, early identification of barriers to attendance, timely intervention and accurate reporting to local authorities where required.

2.5 Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

2.6 Every entry in the admission and attendance registers, including any amendment, will be preserved for six years from the date on which the entry was made, in accordance with regulation 7 of the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the school's data protection and records-management arrangements.

2.7 The school will maintain effective day-to-day processes for following up absence, including first-day response, safeguarding checks, communication with parents and carers, and escalation where attendance concerns persist or become severe.

2.8 The school will regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts requiring support, including those who are persistently or severely absent, and will work with families, placing authorities, local authorities and other partners where additional support or statutory intervention may be required.

## 3 Children at Risk of Missing Education

3.1 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will have regard to Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026), Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools (September 2025), the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and

local safeguarding procedures when safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

3.2 Fair Ways School have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for all our students who go missing from school and are absent for periods of time. Fair Ways holds emergency contact numbers for all students, where practicable we hold two numbers.

3.3 If a student is absent from school without notification, the SLT will attempt to contact the primary parent or carer and, where there is no response, will use emergency contact numbers, consider a welfare check, and ensure children's services, the local authority and relevant SEN or safeguarding teams are informed where appropriate. Actions taken will be recorded, including the reason for absence once established.

3.4 Where absence gives rise to safeguarding concern, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures without delay. This may include seeking advice from children's social care, the local authority, the placing authority, police or other relevant services, and recording all actions taken.

3.5 A student who remains on the school roll is not, solely because of persistent or severe absence, a child missing education for the statutory definition. Nevertheless, repeated or prolonged absence, unexplained absence and concerning patterns of absence can be safeguarding warning signs. Staff will consider the child's circumstances, vulnerabilities and voice, consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate, share information lawfully and take prompt action in the child's best interests.

3.6 Before deleting a compulsory-school-age student from the admission register in circumstances where their destination or education is uncertain, the school will comply with the prescribed grounds for deletion, make and document reasonable enquiries jointly with the relevant local authority where required, notify the local authority of the proposed deletion where the regulations require this, and retain safeguarding information needed to support continuity of education and welfare.

3.7 Where a student is at risk of becoming a child missing education, the school will first undertake and record proactive enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and educational arrangements. If those enquiries do not resolve the concern, the school will refer promptly to the local authority and work jointly on further reasonable enquiries. The school will not delay a safeguarding referral while completing attendance or children-missing-education processes.

## 4 Holidays in term time

4.1 Parents and carers are expected to take holidays during school holiday periods to minimise the impact on education, safeguarding and routine. Term-time leave should not normally be granted for holidays. Any request for leave of absence during term time will be considered individually and may only be authorised where the Headteacher or Head of School determines that there are exceptional circumstances, taking account of the student's needs, attendance record, safeguarding context and the statutory guidance.

4.2 Parents and carers are expected to submit a leave of absence request form to the school administration team as far in advance as possible and, wherever practicable, at least four weeks before the proposed absence. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

4.3 Where absence is unauthorised, the school may refer the matter to the local authority in line with the national framework for penalty notices and local procedures. Under the current framework, schools and local authorities consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate where there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-school-week period, considered on a case-by-case basis.

4.4 Where a penalty notice is considered appropriate, the school will work with the local authority in line with the national framework. The current framework provides that the first penalty notice issued to a parent for an individual child is £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice for the same parent and child within three years is £160 payable within 28 days; further concerns within that period may require alternative legal intervention.

## 5 Reporting absence / appointments

5.1 It is the parent's / carer's responsibility to notify the school or their tutor on the first day of absence at the earliest opportunity. Absence can be reported by telephoning the school office, contacting tutors or through the school specific channels such as parent hub.

5.2 It is the parent's / carer's responsibility to ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, parents / carers are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance.

5.3 It is the parent's / carer's responsibility to liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness.

5.4Where absence relates to medical, mental health, SEND or disability-related needs, the school will work with parents and carers, health professionals, placing authorities and relevant local authority services to understand the barriers to attendance and agree reasonable, time-limited support in the form of an intervention.

## 6 Difficulties in getting young people to school

6.1 Attending school can be an extremely challenging task for a lot of students, Fair Ways School recognise this and have strategies in place to support young people and their families including planned transitions, interventions, staggered start times, 1:1 support.

6.2 Fair Ways School will keep staff, parents and carers informed about attendance through regular communication with tutors, the Senior Leadership Team and other relevant staff, depending on the level of attendance concern and agreed support plan. See Appendix C for the communication flowchart.

6.3 Fair Ways School may use positive recognition and incentive approaches to encourage attendance, provided these are used alongside supportive conversations and individualised support. Incentives will not replace the school's duty to identify and respond to barriers to attendance.

## 7 Current statutory compliance and safeguarding

7.1 The Executive Head will ensure that a named senior leader has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. The school will make its attendance policy readily available, communicate clear expectations and reporting arrangements to students and families, and ensure relevant staff understand their responsibilities and receive appropriate training.

7.2 In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, all staff will treat safeguarding as everyone's responsibility and remain alert to absence as a possible indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental or physical ill health, unmet SEND, harmful behaviour or other welfare concerns. Concerns will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay and managed through the school's child-protection procedures; immediate action will be taken where a child is at risk of harm.

7.3 Attendance support will be child-centred and coordinated. Relevant information will be shared with the local authority, placing authority, social care, health services, the Virtual School Head and other partners where lawful, necessary and proportionate.

7.5 The school will monitor attendance daily, identify emerging patterns promptly and review the impact of support. Leaders and the Executive Head will review attendance information regularly, including persistent and severe absence and relevant vulnerable groups, challenge trends and ensure that improvement actions are followed through. As an independent school, Fair Ways School will provide attendance and student information to the local authority or Department for Education where there is a legal requirement or lawful request; independent schools are not required by the July 2026 guidance to submit daily attendance data to the Department.

7.6 The Executive Head, working with senior leaders and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, will ensure that every member of staff, including staff who do not work directly with children, reads at least Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, receives appropriate safeguarding induction and updates, and is supported to understand and discharge their responsibilities.

7.7 Attendance-related safeguarding concerns will be recorded clearly and securely. Records will include a summary of the concern, actions taken, decisions made and the rationale for those decisions, and outcomes. Information will be shared when necessary to safeguard a child; data protection law will not be treated as a barrier to appropriate safeguarding information sharing.

7.8 This policy will be read alongside the school's safeguarding and child-protection policy, SEND and medical-needs arrangements, behaviour and exclusions policies, records-management policy and local authority attendance and children-missing-education procedures. Where legislation or statutory guidance changes before the next scheduled review, the current legal requirements and statutory guidance will take precedence, and the policy will be updated promptly.

## 8. Associated Documentation & Legislation

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- DfE statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance, the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

# Appendix A – Absence and Attendance Codes

DfE statutory guidance: Working together to improve school attendance – **use the latest published version when applying attendance codes.**

**Present (affects % attendance)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| / or \ | Present /morning session or \afternoon session | Count as attending |
| L | Late (after register closed) | |
| W | Attending work experience - please see DfE notes | Count as attending an approved educational activity |
| V | Attending an educational Visit or Trip | |
| B | Attending any other approved off-site educational Activity - please see DfE notes check with SLT before using | |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority - see DfE guidance check with SLT before using | |

**Register closes 30mins after start time e.g 10:00 for morning registration and 13:00 for afternoon registration**

**Authorised Absences (affects % attendance)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| C | **Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances - please see DfE notes**<br><br>*344. All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence should not, and from school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority, must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.*<br>*345. Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a student can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.*<br>*346. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can only grant such a leave of absence under regulation 11(11), where an application is made in advance by a parent the student normally lives with (or the student if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence).*<br>*347. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.* | Count as authorised absence |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *348. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record where a student is absent with leave for a reason that is not covered by another leave of absence code.* | |
| C2 | **Leave of absence for a compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable e.g medical adjustment to timetable**<br><br>*340. All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a student's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs in line with paragraphs 67 – 70.*<br><br>*341. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant a leave of absence, under regulation 11(6) to temporarily reduce the timetable of a student of compulsory school age to part-time, if the school and a parent who the student normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the student should temporarily be educated only part-time and have agreed the times and dates when the student will, during the period of temporary part-time education, be expected to attend the school.*<br><br>*342. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record when a student is absent with leave because they are subject to a part-time timetable in line with an agreement between the school and a parent the student normally lives with that the student should temporarily be educated part-time.* | |
| J1 | Attending an interview | |
| M | Medical/Dental Appointment | |
| R | Religious observance - see DfE notes (parents religious observance) | |
| S | Study Leave - please see DfE notes | |
| I | Illness (Not medical or Dental, includes physical and mental illness) | |
| E | Excluded | |

**Un-Authorised Absences (affects % attendance)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| G | **Holiday not granted by the school** | Count as Unauthorised |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *391. The school has not granted a leave of absence and the student is absent for the purpose of a holiday.*<br>*392. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.* | |
| O | **Absent in other unknown circumstances**<br><br>*397. Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.* | |
| U | **Arrived in school after registration closed**<br><br>*Relevant regulation 10 (7) and (8)*<br>*399. Where a student has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.*<br>*400. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a student will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes.* | |
| **Codes not impacting % attendance** | | |
| X | **Non-compulsory school age student not required to be in school.**<br><br>*Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.* ***Or after the last Friday in June for those aged 16 by the end of the Summer holidays.*** | Not a possible attendance |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Q | **Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements - e.g LA had legal duty to put transport in place but it hasn't been put in place yet**<br>*Code Q is only used where a student is absent because the local authority has a legal duty to arrange home-to-school travel for the student and they have not done so, or because the student has no choice but to attend a school that does not qualify for such travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live. These circumstances are set out in law but in summary are where:*<br>*• the local authority has a duty to arrange the student's home to school travel and has not; or*<br>*• the student is registered at a private school that is beyond walking distance from the student's home and the local authority has not arranged boarding for them or enabled them to go to a state school nearer to their home; or*<br>*• the student lives in Wales and a Welsh local authority has a duty to provide home to school travel and has not. 13* | |
| Y1 | **Unable to attend due to transport <u>normally</u> provided not being available e.g taxi broke down**<br><br>*371. The student is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the student by the school or local authority is not available.*<br>*372. Walking distance in relation to a child under the age of 8, means 2 miles, and for a child of 8 or above, means 3 miles. In each case measured by the nearest available route.* | |
| Y2 | **Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel e.g roads closed due to snow fall**<br><br>*374. The student is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency.* | |
| Y3 | **Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed**<br><br>*376. Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the student is one of those premises that remain in use.* | |
| Y4 | **Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed e.g unplanned closure**<br><br>*378. Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse* | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every student listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed.*<br>*379. This code may not be used for any planned closure such as weekends or holidays.* | |
| Y5 | **Unable to attend as student is in criminal justice detention**<br><br>*Relevant regulation 10(14)*<br>*381. The student is unable to attend the school because they are:*<br>*• in police detention,*<br>*• remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or*<br>*• detained under a sentence of detention.*<br>*382. If a student is remanded to local authority accommodation, they should attend school as normal where possible and where it is not possible any absence should be recorded using the appropriate code.*<br>*383. A student's absence should be recorded under code Y7 (Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause) if they are unable to attend because they are serving a community based (i.e. non-detained) part of a sentence of detention, referral order, or youth rehabilitation order that requires them to be absent during the school day.*<br>*384. Schools are expected to communicate with the student's Youth Offending Team worker while the student is in custody and remains on the school roll to discuss the student's educational needs, progress and return to the school upon their release where appropriate. Education is a key part of effective resettlement and therefore it is important that schools maintain contact with the Youth Offending Team throughout the sentence to support the child's resettlement where appropriate.* | |
| Y6 | **Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law**<br><br>*388. The student is well enough to attend (otherwise Code I would have been recorded) but there are Government rules or guidance to limit the spread of infection or disease which say they should not attend.*<br>*389. Meaning, the student's travel to or attendance at the school would be:*<br>*• contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland), or* | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *• prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.* | |
| Y7 | **Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause - use with caution and consider all other options first**<br><br>*390. An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the student from attending the school.*<br>*391. This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the student from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the student, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can do to secure the attendance of the student at school does not, in itself, mean the student has been prevented by unavoidable cause.*<br>*392. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause (regulation 10(6)), examples are:*<br>*• Bail conditions (that prevent the student from attending the school or being present in the area where the school is situated)*<br>*• Court attendance (where the student is legally required to attend Court)* | |
| # | **Planned whole school closure**<br><br>*407. Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance such as:*<br>*• days between terms;*<br>*• half terms;*<br>*• occasional days (for example, bank holidays);*<br>*• weekends (where it is required by the management information system);*<br>*• up to 5 non-educational days; and*<br>*• use of the whole school as a polling station.* | Code not collected |
| Z | Prospective student not on admissions register | |
| N | Holding code whilst awaiting reason | Amend once reason known within 5 days |

# Appendix B – Absence Form

## Student absence request form - holiday

Attendance at school every day is vital for your child's academic and social development. However, we recognise the needs of our students and know that sometimes taking holiday in busy times of the year, can be very stressful. Therefore, we will support where this is appropriate.

If you wish to request leave of absence during term time, please submit this form to the school administrator as far in advance as possible and, wherever practicable, at least **four** weeks before the proposed absence. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.
Please be aware that requests will only be authorised where the school determines that exceptional circumstances apply. Each request will be considered individually, taking account of the reason for the request, the notice given, the student's attendance record, their individual needs and any safeguarding considerations.

Name of student: _____ Date of Application_____

Dates requested for leave:

_____

Reason for absence:

_____

_____

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**School use only:**

Name of student: _____ Date of Response_____

Approved/not approved

Reason not approved_____

Authorised/unauthorised

Reason unauthorized_____

## Appendix C – Communication Flowchart

