Fair Ways Schools
Engagement Policy

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SC13	1	Launch	Gareth Webb	December 2015	
For details of versions 2-9 please refer to control sheet at end of policy					
SC13	10	Review 2024/2025	Victoria Adams	September 2024	PSC
SC13	11	Amendments to 3.1 'non-teaching member of staff who has counselling qualifications' replaced by 'member of the pastoral team'	Laura Rowe	March 2025	PSC
SC13	12	Updated in line with current attendance, safeguarding, SEND and off-site education legislation and statutory guidance	Victoria Adams	October 2026	PSC

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Contributors;

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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*:

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

1 Introduction

1.1 Due to the nature of the students who attend Fair Ways Education Provision, it may be necessary to implement an initial transition timetable to support positive engagement, build trusting relationships and enable careful reintegration into education. Any short term bespoke timetable will be used only where it is in the young person's best interests, agreed with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the placing local authority and relevant professionals, kept under regular review, accurately recorded for attendance purposes, and planned with the clear aim of returning the young person to full-time education as soon as they are able to access it safely and successfully.

1.2 Students often arrive to Fair Ways Education following what can often be prolonged periods without education, whether this has been permanent exclusion or only attending for 1 hour a day 3 times a week due to their complex behaviours. The majority of students have previously failed in a range of schools and education provisions, which have been unable to cater to their very individual needs and learning styles. Often students enter our school thinking this will be just another school, where they will be listened to but not heard, talked at rather than spoken to.

1.3 The majority of students are looked after children and may experience a number of social care changes or disruptions over time. There may be periods during the academic year when students are settled and engaging, and other periods where external issues, such as a breakdown in family contact or high-risk behaviours in the community, may cause disengagement or concerning behaviours in school. During these times, through dynamic risk assessment and multi-agency planning, individual timetables may need to be adjusted, or an intervention plan implemented to meet their needs, including more activity-based or off-site learning where appropriate. The objective will always be to minimise stress, arousal levels and high-risk behaviours, promote positive engagement, maintain safeguarding oversight and support all students to return to increased participation on the main school site as soon as it is suitable and safe to do so.

1.4 At Fair Ways, we see each young person as an individual who needs a distinct approach and strategy to re-engage them with education and learning. Fair Ways

School prides itself on working to make the curriculum match the young person, rather than expecting the young person to fit the curriculum. Students who have only attended previous school provisions for 1 hour a day will not only find a full academic timetable too stressful and demanding, causing them to dis-engage, but it will not meet their social, emotional and behavioural development needs.

1.5 To enable this we sometimes find we need to opt out of a 'normal' timetable and use a range of tasks focusing purely on engaging or re-engaging the young person in a positive fashion. It can be frightening and a bit daunting for our students to be asked what they enjoy doing or what they are interested in; most schools prior to us will have told them what lessons they will attend with little opportunity for them to pursue an interest. Students struggle to engage in any timetable until they begin to build positive relationships with staff and begin to view learning in a more positive light.

1.6 Fair Ways Education focuses offsite activities around developing student's self-awareness, social skills, empathy, managing feelings and motivation. Fair Ways has an objective in order to support student's engagement, enabling them to manage their feelings and emotions. Offsite activities will be based around providing motivation, guiding students to participate in activities they enjoy building self-esteem and self-confidence promoting positive relationships with staff. Offsite teaching encourages students to work towards goals, guiding them to be more persistent, resilient and optimistic.

1.7 Offsite activities allow staff to deliver 1:1 pastoral work away from the main school and stress of other students. This is valuable time in supporting students to know themselves and explore their understanding of how they think and feel, especially after incidents both in school and outside of school. This time also allows for mentor support from trusting adults, role modelling positive behaviour out in the community and providing support on positive social skills. During time offsite staff constantly guide and have strategies for students on how to solve problems and conflicts with other students or adults in school.

1.8 To this end, the following are examples of subjects and approaches that can be timetabled to support positive re-engagement with education. All arrangements must be risk assessed, inclusive, recorded, safeguarded and reviewed in line with

current statutory guidance, including attendance, safeguarding, SEND, health and safety and alternative provision expectations.

2 Outdoor and Adventure Education

2.1 Fishing

The calm, gentle nature of this activity gives students a chance to relax and talk to staff. The therapeutic element of sitting and doing very little allows students to engage positively and begin to build trust. There are AQA unit awards that can be gained, which evidence their engagement and enjoyment.

2.2 Cycling

This activity allows students to engage in an outdoor activity using up energy and dampening arousal levels, which can support students in re-gaining concentration, for example, offsite in the morning biking and in school engaging in lessons in the afternoon. Learning objectives can support the students' ability to prepare for biking, appropriate dress code, health and safety aspects, basic maintenance and riding different terrains. There are AQA unit awards that can be gained, which evidence their engagement and enjoyment.

2.3 Bushcraft

Bushcraft is an incredible educational and engagement tool. By taking students out of their comfort zone and into nature, students will ordinarily be more open to building relationships with staff. The flexible, yet structured, nature of bushcraft promotes the students to be trusting of staff and give kinaesthetic feedback to learners through their improved skills in relation to shelter building, controlled fire lighting, cooking and whittling. There is a vast curriculum based around bushcraft which can result in students achieving qualifications for their efforts.

3 Pastoral Work

3.1 It is standard practice for all students to have Pastoral time on their timetable. The emotional benefits of allowing students to offload in a safe, non-threatening

environment speak for themselves. Timetabled with a member of the pastoral team who will work in conjunction with the therapeutic hub, these sessions can be as structured or relaxed as needed to allow students to offload or to just take some time out, all depending on what issues are taking place outside of school. Some students choose to go offsite for a walk in the woods or use this time to play games while chatting with staff – sitting alongside a member of staff is less threatening than facing them. Other students request going out for a drive, again sitting next to staff is less confrontational and gives them the opportunity to talk.

4 Sensory Room

4.1 Fair Ways education sites have their own sensory rooms which can be used by all those within Fair Ways School. This is an excellent resource which allows students the chance to stop and relax. Some students benefit from visits from our Occupational Therapist, which are held in the sensory room, using a range of resources to meet their complex and varied needs.

5 The Therapeutic Hub

5.1 Fair Ways has access to a host of qualified therapeutic practitioners, occupational therapists, educational psychologist, play therapists, music therapists etc, that can be commissioned to work with students as required. This offers students the chance to explore their emotions and experiences in a safe environment with qualified staff who can engage with them at an appropriate level.

6 Flexibility

6.1 Ultimately, to engage with our students we need to be flexible and adaptable. We need to find a solution when presented with a problem and this often requires us to think outside of every box possible. There are occasions when timetables are changed at very short notice to try and give our students every possible chance to make a positive choice and engage. Sometimes we encourage students to work separately so that they can then do an activity together. Combined with the weekly points system, students are able to keep working towards an end of week activity which can be a group event if engagement and work have been positive.

6.2 Changes to timetables are made only where necessary and should be evidence-informed, proportionate, time-limited and centred on the needs of the young person. They will usually follow a period of disengagement, concern or assessment of need and must include clear intended outcomes, review points and named staff responsibility. Attendance and engagement will be monitored daily for all students, with Clear Care and school attendance systems used to record positive and negative learning, engagement, off-site education and any authorised absence accurately. This allows staff to evaluate the effectiveness of any intervention, meet attendance recording requirements and adjust support accordingly.

7 Play

7.1 Play is crucial for children and students to learn and develop. Play can help to build self-worth by giving students a sense of their own abilities and to feel good about themselves. Wherever possible play is a huge part of our learning journeys.

7.2 Play is fun for students, and they can become absorbed in what they are doing, which can support with their self-regulation and enable them to feel more engaged in the classroom.

7.3 Play is used across Fair Ways School to help develop language skills, emotions, creativity and social skills. Play helps to nurture imagination and give a child a sense of adventure. It is used to help students learn essential skills such as problem solving, working with others, sharing and much more.

8 Associated Documentation & Legislation

- Education Act 1996, including duties relating to suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, including safeguarding and welfare duties.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments and avoid discrimination.
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance, statutory guidance, July 2026.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, statutory guidance, September 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, statutory guidance.
- Alternative Provision: statutory guidance for local authorities and related Department for Education guidance.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Fair Ways Safeguarding Policy, Attendance Policy, Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy, Educational Visits/Off-site Activities Policy and Risk Assessment procedures.

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SC13	1	Launch	Gareth Webb	December 2015	
SC13	2	Review 2016 / 2017	Gareth Webb	November 2016	
SC13	3	Review 2017 / 2018	Gareth Webb	November 2017	QSGC
SC13	4	Review 2018 / 2019	Laura Willis	October 2018	QSGC
SC13	5	Review 2019 / 2020	Laura Willis	October 2019	QSGC
SC13	6	Review 2020 / 2021	Laura Rowe	October 2020	QSGC
SC13	7	Review 2021 / 2022: Added importance of play	Laura Rowe	October 2021	QSGC
SC13	8	Changed review date to every 2 years 2021 / 2023	Laura Rowe	October 2022	PSC
SC13	9	Review 2023/2025	Laura Rowe	October 2023	OSC
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