



## Whole School Attendance Policy

### Updating Policy Procedure

When a policy is due for review it will be emailed to the reviewer who will revise and highlight those updates and return the policy in full with the highlighted updates back to the Policy Co-Ordinator.

When a policy reviewer becomes aware of **any updates** they will ask the Policy Co-Ordinator to email the policy to them and follow the above procedures.

A policy is a statement of intent and the guidelines we follow, that is adopted by the Fortuna and Athena Federation's Governing Body.

Policy Reviewed by:

Jaye Keogh – EWO  
Craig Chaplin – Fortuna School  
Zoe West – Athena School

Updated on:

October 2024

Date to be reviewed:

October 2026

Date Ratified at FGM:

09/12/2024

### **Mission Statement**

The Fortuna and Athena Federation is committed to providing a full and impactful education for all pupils. The federation believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education our schools provide when they attend school regularly. To this end the Fortuna and Athena Federation will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

### **It is recognised that:**

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents/carers may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents/carers, work in partnership with families and external agencies to address these challenges.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence.

### **It is recognised that:**

Special schools are less likely to have day-to-day contact with parents/carers than their mainstream counterparts as many pupils will travel some distance to school and/or make use of local authority educational transport. For this reason, it is important to consider how best to establish and maintain links between home and school.

Parents/carers will be informed of any referrals to another agency. Letters will be regularly sent home to parents/carers updating them of their child's individual attendance level.

The Fortuna and Athena Federation have regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer who will support where there are concerns relating to attendance. Should these issues not be resolved in a timely manner, the school adopt a systematic approach to support parent/carers and young people into promoting improved school attendance.

The Government defines '**Persistent Absence**' (PA) as:

- > Any student who has an attendance level of 90% or less is classed as a 'Persistent Absentee'.
- > Any student who misses more than 10% (19 school days) schooling within and across the academic year for whatever reason (either authorised or unauthorised). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any learner's educational prospects and we need parent/carer's full support and co-operation to challenge this.

The Government defines '**Severe Absence**' (PA) as:

- > Any student who is missing 50% or more of their education.

If following appropriate support there is not an improvement in attendance the school will make a referral to social care in accordance with Section 87 of Working Together to Improve School Attendance as this may constitute neglect.

### **Parents/Carers Responsibility**

- To honour the home/school agreement signed on admission.
- Parents/carers must ensure that their child attends school every day.
- To ensure that their child arrives at school within the registration window between 8:30 and 9:15am. N.B. The length of this period is due to the exceptionally large catchment area of both schools.
- Ensure medical appointments are made outside of the school day where possible.
- To notify the school and SEN Transport (if used) in advance of any planned absence.
- To contact the school before 9am if pupils are unwell and unable to attend school.
- To ensure holidays are only taken during school holiday time, not term time.
- To engage in the 'Attend Framework' process if required to do so.

### **School Responsibility**

- School office will telephone home to ascertain reasons for an absence if no one has called from home by 9am.
- Late arrival, will be registered with the office before joining class and their attendance is recorded, even after the registers have closed **at 9:15am**, in case of a fire or other emergency.
- The Attendance Officer will track absence and meet regularly with a member of SLT to discuss concerns. Next steps will be agreed and actioned.
- Utilise the 'Attend Framework' to identify underlying reasons for absence by enabling professionals to engage the pupil to work in a collaborative approach to positively affect their attendance.
- Ensure regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance using school registers (twice a day).

### **SEN and Attendance**

As a specialist SEMH setting the Fortuna and Athena Federation will see to work together with families to support a good level of attendance and address persistent absenteeism when **this** occurs. The school will also work alongside a range of appropriate professional including:

- Social care professionals (e.g. social worker, early help workers)
- Mental health professionals (MHST, CAHMS, psychologists)
- Medical professionals (School nurse, paediatricians, **GP**)
- Lincolnshire Education Transport Services **and other transport services**.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate with consideration of individual needs. After appropriate consultation, the school will determine what constitutes a reasonable adjustment. Some adjustments may be indefinite to meet an ongoing need, whilst others such as part-time timetables will be timebound and **4-weekly** reviewed. These will be documented in either a School Attendance Panel record or a Health Meeting record.



## Attendance Step-by Step

The Federation will use the following protocol in the event of a pupil been absent from school:

Time Frame	Who/When	Record	Notes
<b>Day 1 and ongoing</b>	Office after 9am	Integris Register & CPOMS if reason for concern.	To ascertain reason for absence. If no answer, follow up with a call later in the day.  If still no answer, send an email reminding of the need to notify school in the event of absence and requesting the parent/carer contact the school.
<b>Day 2</b>	Class or pastoral staff on the same day	CPOMS	To call to see when they will be returning. Is there anything the student is worried about? Give the family an overview of what has been covered in the classroom.
<b>Day 3</b>	CAFO / AHT	CPOMS	Call to discuss issues around attendance.
<b>Day 5</b>	Welfare call to speak to child	CPOMS  CME referral if appropriate	A welfare call/home visit to ensure we have spoken to the child directly.  Referral as 'Missing in Education' if appropriate.
<b>Day 10</b>	Office / AHT	To complete a PNAR form.	After 10 consecutive days of non-attendance a PNAR survey is completed online and a SAP meeting to be booked, <b>if appropriate.</b>
<b>Day 15</b>	EWO/CAFO	CPOMS	To visit the students' home and meet with the family to discuss attendance and consider any other barriers.

## End of Term Reviews and Intervention Thresholds

Both schools will review attendance each half term and the following thresholds of action followed:

Above 97%	Less than 6 days absence a year: Pupils with this attendance are well place to make good academic and personal progress.	
Less than 95%	Less than 10 days absence a year: Pupils are likely to make good progress with their learning and personal development.	A letter will be sent to parents/carers to make them aware attendance has dropped below 95%. This letter will indicate whether this is predominately due to authorised or unauthorised absence.
Less than 90%	19 days of absence a year: This is the equivalent of missing a month of education and is likely to impact progress in math's and English. It will be difficult for children to catch up on missed learning.	An escalation letter will be sent that ensures parents/carers are aware of their child's current level of absence and the need to act in order to improve attendance.



Where there are concerns about persistent absenteeism	It will be very difficult for children to keep up with learning and achieve their best.	<p>When there are significant concerns about persistent absenteeism the school will invite parents/carers and other relevant professionals to participate in a School Attendance Panel.</p> <p>Should attendance continue to decrease the school will liaise with the EWO and discuss appropriate action. This may include a <b>Penalty Notice</b>.</p> <p>In cases of absenteeism for medical reasons the school will carry out a Health Meeting to discuss barriers to attendance and appropriate support.</p>
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## School Attendance Panel and Health Meetings

Parents/carers and relevant professionals will be invited to take part in a school attendance panel (SAP) when persistent absenteeism is a significant concern. The purpose of these panels is to explore the reasons for low-attendance and agree upon an action plan that will improve attendance.

An initial meeting will take place and there will be a discussion around what is working well in regard to attendance, what concerns the school has and what needs to happen. This discussion will then inform an action plan. The action plan will be reviewed and amended each half term (shorter review periods may be required where significant concerns around attendance exist). SAPs will close when an agreed threshold of attendance (typically 95%) is met for two consecutive half terms.

If there is a lack of engagement from parents/carers with the SAP, these will be carried out in their absence and a copy of the SAP action plan will be communicated by post or email.

All SAP action plans will be shared with the EWO, who may advise the school of additional support and action that should be considered.

In instances of absenteeism due to medical reasons the federation will request a Health Meeting. To support this meeting the EWO may request information from medical professionals and a letter would be provided to request consent for this.

## Penalty Notice

Should a School Attendance Panel not result in an improvement in attendance the school's Attendance Lead will consult with the Education Welfare Officer as to whether a Penalty Notice is appropriate.

In the event of a lack of engagement with the School Attendance Panel, such as not attending the panel meetings, a fixed penalty notice will be issued following the second cycle.

A 'Notice to Improve' letter will be issued after all the support has been offered and a child's school attendance has not improved. Copies of the 'Notice to Improve' letters will be forwarded to the Local Authority.

'Notice to improve' as outlined in the [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000000/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))



## Other Action

If following the above, attendance does not improve, the school will follow local guidelines and the following additional courses of action will be considered:

- Education Supervision Orders
- Attendance Prosecution
- Parenting Orders

## Rewards

Attendance Level	Primary	Secondary	
<b>100% pupils</b>	Half-termly Letter to parents/carers recognising positive attendance	Excellent 100% Attendance Certificate	Personal reward and raffle ticket.
<b>95% + pupils</b>		Good Attendance Certificate	Raffle ticket
<b>Most improved class (minus long term non-attenders)</b>		Most Improved Class in School attendance certificate.	Class reward – such as – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film and popcorn/ pizza</li> <li>• Visit to Daisy Made</li> <li>• Park and picnic</li> <li>• Bowling</li> </ul>
<b>Impactful School Attendance Panel</b>	Bespoke rewards systems specified into the SAP	Thank you letter to families.	Bespoke rewards as required.

## Children Missing Education (CME)

The school follows the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Panel (LSCP) procedures and will make enquiries into the location of students with continuous unauthorised absence or those who fail to return from leave of absence granted during term time.

After 5 days of unexplained absence the school will conduct a home visit and ascertain if the child is still living at the address on record. After 5 days of unexplained absence the school will complete a 'School Risk Assessment for Child Missing Education (CME)' and forward to the CME Officer at the Local Authority. The school will also notify the EWO. The CME risk assessment is reported via Perspective Lite.

## Pupils Not Attending Regularly (PNAR)

The Fortuna and Athena Federation will inform the Local Authority of any Pupil Not Attending Regularly (PNAR) . The definition of PNAR is a student that has been absent for 10 consecutive school days with either no reason provided or where school has not accepted the reason provided.

PNAR referrals should be made using the link below:

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-attendance/pupil-attendance/3>

The school should notify the local authority when the pupil returns to school, the Local Authority should be made aware by email ([attendance@Lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@Lincolnshire.gov.uk)) with the subject heading 'PNAR Child Returned'. The email should contain the child's name, date of birth and date of return.

### **Reduced Timetables**

All children are entitled to attend school full time, but in some circumstances it may be appropriate for children to attend school on a temporarily reduced time table. Where a temporary reduced timetable results in a child attending school less than 30 hours per week (as is the normal hours in our SEMH provision), the school will follow statutory guidance and local protocols which can be found on Perspective Lite. Key points to note are:

- A reduced timetable can only be granted to meet the needs of the child.
- A reduced timetable must be agreed by parents/carers.
- The local authority must be informed of reduced timetables.
- Reduced timetables are to be coded as C2 when not due in school.
- A pastoral support plan must be in place if the reduced timetable is due to behavioural, social or emotional needs (the federation will use the SAP process for this).
- Reduced Timetables are reviewed every 4 weeks and all professionals involved have to agree and support this interim plan.

### **Request for Leave of Absence**

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated in August 2024 and are set out in Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024). The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher can determine the length of the authorised absence and whether the absence is authorised. The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are rare, significant or unavoidable.

There is no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence are advised to complete a child's leave of absence form which is obtained from the school, the schools website or through the Reach More Parents App, at least two weeks prior to the leave date and before making any travel arrangements. Each case will be looked at on an individual basis. If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from school, the absence will be unauthorised in the student's record and a Penalty Notice will be sought (Section 444A of the Education Act 1996).

A Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children at their school under the following legislation:

**Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents/carers a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.**

**Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent/carer fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent/carer is liable to be prosecuted for a**

**criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.**

**In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers The Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £80.00 or £160.00**

**Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes it a duty for parents/carers in relation to learners subject to a fixed period or permanent exclusion to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of any such exclusion. If a child is present in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion during school hours the parent/carer may be guilty of an offence for which they can be prosecuted by the LA before a magistrates' court or issued with a Penalty Notice for £80.00 or £160.00.**

Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will result in the case being referred to Lincolnshire County Council for consideration of prosecution under the Single Justice Process (SJP). This will lead to the matter being put before the Magistrates Court for prosecution.

School term dates are available from the school website, **the Reach More Parents App and the** school office.

### **School Organisation**

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition, there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

#### **Head Teacher**

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents/carers.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- To liaise with the EWO.

#### **Head Teacher together with Attendance Lead, CAFO or Senior Administrator Office Manager:**

- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To oversee the work of administrative staff.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
- To meet regularly on attendance issues.
- To liaise with the EWO.
- To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents/carers.
- To inform senior staff of concerns in a timely manner
- To send daily attendance reports to **Head Teacher/ CAFO/ Taxi Co-ordinator.**
- To produce termly attendance reports for the **Head Teacher.**
- To produce and send termly (Fortuna) monthly (Athena) reports for EWO and advise of any actions taken, and to act on recommendations made.
- To produce attendance concern letters, including **Penalty Final Warning** Letters on behalf of **Head Teacher**, EWO as instructed.
- To produce termly attendance reports for parents, with year to date and term attendance data.
- Advise **Head Teacher/ EWO** of any absence that may fall under Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board CME procedures, from Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services March 2021.



### **Governors**

- Governors are provided with school attendance details at each full governing body meeting and also discussed in a separate item at the safeguarding and standard committee meetings with specific information in the report.

### **Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**

#### **The EWO:**

- Will regularly liaise and consult with the school regarding attendance issues, this includes receiving termly reports via email and termly meetings with Administrative Assistant/School Attendance Lead.
- Will provide advice regarding the regulations governing the part-time employment of school children.
- Will prepare and recommend legal proceedings in cases of irregular school attendance including fixed penalty notices and Education Supervision Orders.
- May request medical evidence if the authenticity of an illness is in doubt and request a medical view should further support be required.
- May undertake home visits to meet with parents/carers to discuss concerns related to school attendance.

### **Data Protection**

The Fortuna and Athena Federation follow this policy alongside the data protection policy.

Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the Police or Social Care where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

### **Safeguarding**

The Fortuna and Athena Federation follow this policy alongside the child protection and safeguarding policy.