ATTENDANCE POLICY

Version 1.0

Policy Owner: Laura Kobylanski
Date Policy reviewed: August 2026
Approval Date: September 2026
Date of next Review: August 2027
Approved By: LGB

Version History

Version	Date Approved	Amendments (Briefly Detail Changes and section/page number)	Substantive or Operational Amendment	Approved By: Substantive – Trust Board Operational – Head of Function/CEO
Example 1.0	*06.01.2026*	*Page 4 – update to the relevant legislation* *Page 6 – update to the role holder in the Trust*	*Operational*	*CEO*

Contents

1.0 Aim of this policy 4
2.0 Key principles....4
3.0 Roles and responsibilities 4
3.1 The School will: 4
3.2 Parents and carers 7
3.3 pupils....7
3.4 Senior Attendance Champion 7
3.5 The board of Governors 8
4.0 Registration 8
5.0 Late arrivals 9
6.0 Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation 9
6.1 Reporting absence from the School....9
6.2 Appointments 10
6.3 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time) 10
6.4 Religious observance....11
7.0 Addressing poor attendance and punctuality....11

APPENDICES

Attendance Policy

1.0 Aim of this policy

To support excellent levels of attendance for all pupils to enable fulfilment of their potential at Fountains Primary School.

This policy has been prepared with regard to the school's statutory duties relating to attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance entitled Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026), which is referred to in this policy as the "DfE Attendance Guidance".

2.0 Key principles

- High levels of attendance and punctuality are actively encouraged and recognised.
- It is the responsibility of everybody at Fountains Primary School to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Regular attendance means attending every day you are able.
- Where attendance or punctuality do not meet our school's target of 95%, steps will be taken to address this in line with our Graduated Response to Declining Attendance (Appendix 3)
- Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. The school will work with pupils, parents, and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance where possible.
- Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents or pupils have should be discussed with Charlotte Jones (Attendance Officer). Where more detailed support around attendance is required, parents and pupils should contact Laura Kobylanski (Senior Attendance Champion).

3.0 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Fountains Primary School will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefit of regular attendance.
- At Fountains Primary School, attendance is promoted through a proactive, supportive and relationship-based approach that recognises the individual needs of our pupils. As a special school, we understand that attendance barriers may be linked to SEND, medical needs, sensory differences, emotional wellbeing, anxiety, transport arrangements or wider family circumstances. We work closely with families to identify and remove barriers to attendance as early as possible.
- Fountains Primary School promotes good attendance by:
- Maintaining positive relationships with pupils and families through regular communication and early intervention.
- Providing support through the school's Wellbeing Team, Medical Team and leadership team to address barriers to attendance.

- Working in partnership with external agencies including Early Help services, MHST, social care, health professionals, the Esteem MAT FASST team and other specialist services where appropriate.
- Monitoring attendance daily and responding promptly to unexplained absence using safeguarding procedures, including telephone contact, welfare checks and home visits where necessary.
- Holding Team Around the Family (TAF) and multi-agency meetings to coordinate support for pupils experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Working closely with Staffordshire School Transport and transport providers to resolve attendance barriers relating to transport arrangements.
- Providing attendance information to parents throughout the year and discussing attendance during annual reviews, EHCP reviews and other review meetings.
- Celebrating good and improving attendance through certificates, assemblies, class recognition and end-of-year awards.
- Using a graduated response to attendance concerns, ensuring that support and intervention are provided at the earliest opportunity whilst maintaining high expectations for attendance for every pupil.
- Work with pupils and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance.
- Investigate unexplained absence, implementing procedures as detailed in Appendix B and C where appropriate.
- Consider individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Share information, including returns information required to be shared in accordance with School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the DfE Attendance Guidance, and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area, and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation, and guidance.
- Regularly monitor, review, and analyse attendance and absence data, including to identify pupils or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future.
- Ensure that all pupils can access full-time education (or the equivalent) putting strategies in place where there is evidence to suggest that this is not the case.
- Ensure that the Governors and Fountains Primary School leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy.
- Ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the DfE Attendance Guidance.

- Have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (please refer to our child protection policy.
- Provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.
- Support pupils who are returning to education following long-term absence.
- Ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers, using our electronic management information system (Arbor).
- Assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the school to a designated senior leader, known as the Senior Attendance Champion.
- Observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education (Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

3.2 Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time.
- Promote the importance of regular attendance.
- Follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the school (see section 6.1 below).
- Avoid unnecessary absences.
- Keep the School informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.
- Not take their child out of education for holidays during term time (see section 6.3 below).
- Inform the School in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live.
- Observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education (Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk).

3.3 Pupils

We expect pupils to:

- Attend the School regularly and on time.
- Be punctual to all lessons (where applicable).
- Follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the school late (see sections 5 below).

3.4 Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion ("SAC") at the school is Laura Kobylanski (Head of School).

The SAC has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the school and will:

- Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and ensure that these are followed by all staff.
- Evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes.
- Have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school.

- Ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents and pupils.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the SLT and Governors.

3.5 The board of Governors

The board of Governors will:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of school attendance, and promote it across the trust and School's ethos and policies.
- Ensure the School's leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends, and help School leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure School staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support pupils or cohorts to overcome common barriers to attendance.
- Hold termly attendance review meetings with the school lead for attendance and share this regularly at Governors meetings.

4.0 Registration

- The school maintains an attendance register and uses this to record each pupil's attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

Registration session	**Start time**	**End time**
Morning	9:05	9:30
Afternoon	13:15	13:30

- Pupils who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Where pupils arrive after the end of a registration session, the process set out at section 5 applies.
- The register is marked using the national statutory attendance and absence codes which can be found in the DfE Attendance Guidance or Appendix A.

5.0 Late arrivals

- If a pupil arrives after registration has closed for the morning or afternoon session, they must report to the school office as soon as they arrive and explain the reason for their lateness. This will enable the school to record the appropriate attendance code. Where no satisfactory reason is provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

- Where lateness becomes a recurring concern, the school will work with pupils and parents/carers to address the issue in line with the behaviour policy.

6.0 Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

Authorised absence – absence will only be authorised where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the School can authorise absence.

Unauthorised absence – absence will be marked as unauthorised where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

6.1 Reporting absence from the school

- Where a pupil is to be absent from the school without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform the school by telephone on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the school know when they expect the pupil to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the school on each day of absence.

- Any unexplained absence will be followed up by the school promptly.

- In cases where the school needs clarification to accurately record the absence in the attendance register, the parents/carers may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor to support an absence for illness. If satisfactory evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

- Where there are prolonged or repeated patterns of illness, medical evidence may be requested to support the school's understanding of a pupil's health needs and to ensure that appropriate support and/or reasonable adjustments are put in place. Further information regarding the school's arrangements for supporting pupils with medical conditions can be found in the First Aid Policy.

6.2 Appointments

- Medical, dental, and other essential appointments for a pupil should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.
- Where an appointment must take place during school time, the pupil should attend the School for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given to Charlotte Jones (Attendance Officer).

6.3 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)

- The school will grant permission for a pupil to be absent from school in the circumstances described in paragraph 36 of the DfE Attendance Guidance which can be summarised as follows:
    - Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad.
    - Attendance at an interview for entry into another educational setting or future employment.
    - Study leave for public examinations.
    - Temporary, time-limited part-time timetable.
    - Other exceptional circumstances, which will be decided upon based on the individual merits of each case.
- Parents/carers should make every effort to avoid taking pupils out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time.
- To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed via the Application for Leave (Appendix D) to the Head of School and, wherever possible, at least four school weeks ahead of the planned leave.
- Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Head of School will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:
    - Will be confirmed in writing.
    - Is solely at the Head of School's discretion.
    - Is final.
- Where permission is granted, the Head of School will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.

- If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised, and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority (see section 7 below).

6.4 Religious observance

- We recognise that pupils of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Absence from the School will be authorised where a day of religious observance:
    - Falls during school time.
    - Has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs.
- We ask that parents/carers notify the school by writing to Laura Kobylanski (Senior Attendance Champion) in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

7.0 Addressing poor attendance and punctuality

The school will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or groups of pupils who need it most. In doing so, the school, led by the SAC, will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance and changes in attendance at individual pupil, cohort, and year group level to support early intervention.
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and relevant leaders.
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners, as soon as possible, and deliver this support in a targeted manner.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Benchmark School attendance data at each level against local, regional, and national level.
- Monitor the impact of School strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular pupils and particular groups.
- Work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of pupils who the school and/or local authority consider would benefit from targeted support.

Our procedures for managing unexplained absences can be found in Appendix B.

Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:

- A pattern of unauthorised absence.
- A question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival.
- Persistent lateness

We will contact the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality. In cases where the school has been unable to establish a clear reason for absence and/or has welfare concerns about the pupil, a home welfare check may be carried out.

Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental cooperation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies, and/or seeking to put in place an attendance contract (please see Appendix C).

Where a pupil's attendance gives cause for concern, the school will adopt a graduated response that is supportive, child-centred and focused on identifying and removing barriers to attendance. This may include meetings with parents/carers, attendance monitoring, attendance action plans, Early Help involvement, multi-agency support, transport reviews and referrals to appropriate services.

Where attendance concerns involve unauthorised absence, term-time leave taken without authorisation, persistent lateness after the close of registration, or where support has not secured sufficient improvement, the school will consider escalation in line with Staffordshire County Council's attendance procedures and the National Framework for Penalty Notices. This may include the issue of a Notice to Improve, referral to the local authority for a Penalty Notice, prosecution, education supervision orders or other legal interventions available under attendance legislation.

The school will always consider the individual circumstances of the child, including SEND, medical needs, disability, safeguarding concerns and any barriers affecting attendance, before requesting legal intervention. Where out-of-school barriers to attendance are identified, the school will signpost and support access to any additional services.

Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the school, and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a financial penalty (£80 if paid within 21 days; £160 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents, which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.

- When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:
    - The National Framework for penalty notices as set out in paragraphs 179–205 of the DfE Attendance Guidance.
    - The local authority’s code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

- If a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.
- The second notice is charged at £160, this represents an increase of £80 compared to the first notice, early payment rate, because the second notice completely removes the option for a discounted £80 early payment rate. This is applicable for the same child in the same household
- A third notice will bypass fines entirely and move straight to legal prosecution/ alternative attendance interventions such as a parenting order.

Appendix A - Attendance Coding

Fountains Primary School records attendance using the statutory attendance and absence codes set out within the Department for Education's Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Staff responsible for attendance recording are trained to ensure codes are applied accurately and consistently.

Code	Meaning	Description
/	Present (AM)	Pupil present at morning registration
\	Present (PM)	Pupil present at afternoon registration
L	Late	Arrived late before register closed
U	Late after close of register	Arrived after register closed
K	Education provision arranged by LA	Attending provision arranged by the local authority
V	Educational visit or trip	School-approved visit or trip
P	Sporting activity	Approved sporting activity
W	Work experience	Approved work experience placement
B	Other approved educational activity	Approved educational activity off site
D	Dual registration	Attending another setting where also registered
C1	Regulated performance/employment abroad	Authorised absence for approved performance or employment
M	Medical/Dental Appointment	Attending medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Interview with employer or educational provider
S	Study Leave	Approved study leave
X	Not required to be in school	Non-compulsory school age pupil
C2	Part-Time Timetable	Approved temporary part-time timetable
C	Exceptional Circumstances	Leave approved due to exceptional circumstances
T	Parent Travelling for Occupational Purposes	Traveller families travelling for work
R	Religious Observance	Day exclusively set apart for religious observance
I	Illness	Physical or mental health illness
E	Suspended/Excluded	No alternative provision arranged
Q	Lack of Access Arrangements	LA has not arranged access to school
Y1	Transport Not Available	School transport unavailable
Y2	Widespread Travel Disruption	Local/national emergency affecting travel
Y3	Part of School Closed	School cannot accommodate pupil
Y4	Whole School Site Closed	Unexpected school closure
Y5	Criminal Justice Detention	Police detention or youth custody
Y6	Public Health Guidance/Law	Attendance prohibited by public health restrictions

Y7	Other Unavoidable Cause	Any other unavoidable reason preventing attendance
G	Holiday Not Authorised	Holiday taken without approval
N	Reason Not Yet Established	Awaiting reason for absence
O	Unauthorised Absence	No acceptable reason for absence
Z	Prospective Pupil	Registered but not yet on roll
#	Planned Whole School Closure	School holidays and planned closures

Appendix B - Daily Response to Absence

Parents/carers must report absence by 8:45am via telephone, Reach More Parents or email. Parents should provide the child's name, class and reason for absence.

Stage 1: First Day Response
Attendance Officer contacts parent/carer by telephone. Reach More Parents message sent if no response is received. Attendance code N recorded pending explanation. If reason received, appropriate code recorded and process ends.

Stage 2: Escalated Response
Additional attempts made to contact all emergency contacts. DSL informed. Attendance reviewed alongside safeguarding records. Home welfare visit considered where appropriate. If reason received, appropriate code recorded and process ends.

Stage 3: Safeguarding Response
If concerns remain and contact cannot be established, Social Care, First Response and/or Police welfare checks may be considered. All actions recorded on Arbor and safeguarding systems.

Appendix C - Graduated Response to Attendance Concerns

Stage 1 - Attendance Concern Identified
Trigger: Attendance falls below 90% or emerging concerns identified. Actions: Review attendance, identify barriers, offer support and monitor for 3 weeks.

Stage 2 - Notice to Improve
After 3 weeks of persistent absence. Notice to Improve letter issued. Attendance expectations and support reviewed.

Stage 3 - Attendance Panel Meeting
After approximately 6 weeks of persistent absence. Attendance Panel Meeting held with parents/carers and attendance targets agreed.

Stage 4 - Attendance Review
After approximately 9 weeks of persistent absence. Formal review undertaken with consideration of Early Help, FASST, Wellbeing Team, Medical Team and multi-agency support.

Stage 5 - Legal Intervention Considered
After approximately 12 weeks of persistent absence and where support has not secured improvement, referral for Penalty Notice or other legal intervention may be considered.

Appendix D

Fountains Primary School
Application For Leave Of Absence During Term Time

Date of Application:

Child's Full Name:		Date of Birth:	
For the period from (date):		to (date):	
Reason for Request Please provide full details of the exceptional circumstances supporting this request:			
Category: □ Medical □ Bereavement □ Religious Observance □ Armed Forces □ Exceptional Family Circumstances □ Other			
Evidence Attached: □ Medical letter □ Hospital correspondence □ Professional report □ Employer letter □ Funeral details □ Other □ No evidence			

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows	
Child(ren) full name(s)	School(s) attended

Parent/Carer Declaration I understand that leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. If leave is not authorised and my child is absent, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised and may be referred to Staffordshire County Council for consideration under local authority procedures and the National Framework for Penalty Notices.			
Signature of 1st parents/carer(s)		Print Name	
Signature of 1st parents/carer(s)		Print Name	

Please return completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

For Office Use Only

Current Attendance	Attendance: Unauthorised absence: Authorised absence:	Last Year's Attendance	%

Agreed/Not Agreed

□ Approved □ Not Approved □ Approved in Part			
Rationale to decline request:			
Signed: (Head of School)		Date:	
Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent/carer			