



THE FULHAM BOYS SCHOOL

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Revisions Table

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The master copy of this document can be found on the FBS Google Drive, under the "Policies" folder. This is one of a number of policies that are reviewed by the Governing Body, the full list can be found on the FBS Google Drive in the Policies Folder. Minor revisions that just adjust factual items (eg contact details / names) can be made by the author without formal review, and must be recorded in the Revisions table above. Revisions table front sheet was added to all policies during policy review of Summer 2018.



THE FULHAM BOYS SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Date of Next Review: Summer 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The aim of this policy is to:

- 1.1.1 To meet the DfE requirement of at least 95% attendance.
- 1.1.2 Maintain a high percentage of student attendance and punctuality at The Fulham Boys School.
- 1.1.3 Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and boys.
- 1.1.4 Provide a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance-related data to promote timely and effective intervention at all levels within the School.
- 1.1.5 Maintain positive and consistent communication between home and the School.
- 1.1.6 Maintain effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and other appropriate support services and agencies. This will include regular meetings between appropriate student support staff and Local Authority representatives (where required).
- 1.1.7 Recognise and take into account the needs of individual boys when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
- 1.1.8 To equip all boys with the necessary enterprise skills of resilience and have a go attitude to prepare them for the next phase in their lives whether that be further education or the world of work.
- 1.1.9 The person responsible for attendance matters at FBS is Sam Johnson, the Deputy Head Teacher.

2. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

2.1 Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required; preferably in writing.

2.2 Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in school time), emergencies or other unavoidable causes and exceptional circumstances that have been agreed, in advance, by the Headmaster. Family holidays will rarely be authorised even if a boy's attendance exceeds 97%. Where individual attendance is 90% or lower the school will not authorise absence without a note from the doctor. Where the parents have given a reason without a doctor's note these will be marked as explained but not authorised.

2.3 Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (EWS) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- 2.3.1 Parents/carers keeping boys off school unnecessarily.
- 2.3.2 Truancy before or during the school day.
- 2.3.3 Absences which have never been properly explained.
- 2.3.4 Boys who arrive at school too late to be registered as present for the session in question.
- 2.3.5 Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- 2.3.6 Day trips and holidays (exceptional leave) in term time which have not been agreed with the School.
- 2.3.7 Excessive illness without medical evidence.
- 2.3.8 Boys acting as carers.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR ATTENDANCE

3.1 Any absence affects the pattern of a boy's education and regular absence will seriously affect his learning.

3.2 Any boy's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

3.3 The School has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its Attendance Policy to parents / carers and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority and the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF).

3.4 Ensuring regular attendance at The Fulham Boys School is the legal responsibility of parents / carers in the first instance and condoning absence on the part of parents/carers from the School without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in legal action. This is enshrined in Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. Failure of a parent to comply is an offence which can attract a fine of up to £1000.

PROCEDURE

4. PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

4.1 Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents / carers, boys and all members of FBS staff.

4.2 To help us all focus on this we will:

4.2.1 Register boys' attendance at every lesson.

4.2.2 Report to parents / carers on how their son is performing at the School, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment once per term.

4.2.3 Reward outstanding or significantly improving attendance.

4.2.4 We will adopt the following principles:

4.2.4.1 Boys with 97%+ attendance to have letters of commendation sent home every term.

4.2.4.2 Boys with 92-97% attendance to be monitored by Form Tutor.

4.2.4.3 Boys with 86-91% attendance to be monitored by Head of House.

4.2.4.4 Boys with 85% and under to be monitored by Deputy Head Teacher and Local Authority referral considered. The parents of these boys must attend a meeting at school with Head of House and/or Attendance Officer.

4.2.5 Display information around the school underlining the importance of attendance.

4.2.6 Analyse attendance data daily, weekly, half termly and termly.

4.2.7 Make attendance a feature of House Assemblies once every half term.

4.2.8 Celebrate attendance in the Whole School celebration assembly once per term.

5. PARENTAL SUPPORT

5.1 Whilst any boy may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the School, the parents / carers and the boy. If a boy is reluctant to attend, it is never appropriate to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse him attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually exacerbates the situation.

5.2 Parents / carers can support their son by:

- 5.2.1 Ensuring regular and early bed times.
- 5.2.2 Supporting boys in completing their 'own work' learning.
- 5.2.3 Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before.
- 5.2.4 Providing a healthy breakfast.
- 5.2.5 Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly.
- 5.2.6 Retaining open and honest communication with the school.
- 5.2.7 Being positive about school (even if their own experience was less than positive).

5.3 When a boy's attendance has dropped below 90% parents are invited to attend a meeting with their son's Head of House and/or the Attendance officer. Parents will then be asked to sign an attendance contract ensuring all three parties work together to rapidly improve the boy's attendance.

6. PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

6.1 A boy becomes a 'persistent absentee' when he misses 15% or more schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any boy's educational prospects and full parental support and co-operation is required to tackle this.

6.2 The Fulham Boys School monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents / carers will be informed of this immediately.

6.3 PA boys are tracked and monitored carefully and appropriate supportive interventions are put in place where absence affects attainment. This could mean a parent contract and an Attendance Contract will be drawn up with the parents and the student to outline and agree small steps that can be taken to improve attendance.

6.4 In most cases PA are also referred to the relevant Local Authority Education Welfare Services.

7. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

7.1 If a boy is absent, parents / carers must:

- 7.1.1 Contact the School before 8am on each day of absence stating clearly their son's name and reason for absence. 'Unwell' will not be accepted as an adequate reason.
- 7.1.2 Send a note or email (including GP or hospital notes) on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence, even if an initial explanation has been given by telephone.

7.2 If a boy is absent, School staff will:

- 7.2.1 Send an SMS to parents / carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them so that they know that their son has not arrived at the School.
- 7.2.2 The Fulham Boys School operates an automated SMS to notify parents of absence to contribute to promoting the safeguarding of children.
- 7.2.3 Invite parents / carers to a meeting to discuss the situation with the relevant member(s) of staff if the situation persists.
- 7.2.4 Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance & Education Welfare Services (or equivalent) if attendance moves below 85%.

7.3 It is essential that the School has up-to-date telephone numbers, postal addresses and email addresses for parents / carers, in order to ensure that contact can be made without delay whenever necessary. It is the responsibility of parents / carers to ensure that any changes are notified to the School.

8. THE EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICES

8.1 Parents are expected to contact the School at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the School may refer the student to the Education Welfare Services from the relevant Local Authority.

8.2 They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the boy's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 441 and 441a: *"If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence."*

8.3 Alternatively, parents or boys may wish to contact the Education Welfare Service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the School and will give impartial advice. Their contact details can be obtained from the Local Authority's website or from the School office.

9. PUNCTUALITY

9.1 Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a boy misses the start of the day he can miss work and important information. Late arriving boys also disrupt lessons. Ongoing poor punctuality can encourage absenteeism.

9.2 The formal School day starts at 8.30am and we expect students to have arrived in good time for an 8.30am start; boys should arrive by 8.25am. The school gates open at 8am and all boys are expected to be lined up with their form class from 8.27am.

9.3 Any boy arriving late to school in the morning will be seen by the school's Attendance Officer and be issued with a conduct signature for being late. This conduct signature will also be registered on the school's MIS as well as the student being marked as Late for morning registration. All boys who arrive late to school will be required to sit a late detention that day with the Attendance officer. They will be informed of this at the time of arrival and form teachers will be informed via the school MIS. Those boys leaving for sports afternoon that day will be expected in detention the following day.

9.4 Half termly analysis of punctuality will be undertaken by the Attendance officer, Heads of House and the Senior Leadership Team.

9.5 At 9.00am morning registration will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a student arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents / carers could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

9.6 If a boy has a persistent late record, parents / carers will be required to meet with the relevant School staff in an attempt to resolve the problem. However, parents / carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their son to the School on time.

9.7 If a student arrives late to a lesson for an acceptable reason then they must see the Attendance Officer to collect a 'Late Slip' before returning to lessons. Acceptable reasons may include meetings, intervention sessions or music lessons for example. In these circumstances the Attendance Officer will amend the school registers to mark them as present.

9.8 If punctuality concerns are ongoing and school intervention, working with the family, is unsuccessful the school may consider making a referral to Education Welfare Services.

10. EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE

- 10.1 Taking holidays (exceptional leave) in term time will affect a boy's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents / carers to help us by not taking children away during term time.
- 10.2 There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school term time to go on holiday (exceptional leave).
- 10.3 The following are worthy of note:
- 10.3.1 It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
- 10.3.2 Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school and employment.
- 10.3.3 Graduates earn, on average, twice as much money as people who leave school with no qualifications.
- 10.3.4 The Fulham Boys School adopts a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave. Individual cases will be addressed by the Headmaster; parents should write to him directly if they have an exceptional request.
- 10.3.5 Exceptional leave will always be refused when a student's attendance is less than 93%.
- 10.3.6 Exceptional leave will always be refused when the School is aware of any truancy.
- 10.3.7 Exceptional leave will always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
- 10.3.8 Reasons for Exceptional Leave will be logged on the boy's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.
- 10.3.9 The Education Welfare Service can issue Fixed Penalty Notices for any unauthorised absence. This is enshrined in Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. Failure of a parent to comply is an offence which can attract a fine of up to £1000.
- 10.3.10 Holidays (Exceptional Leave) taken in term time, which are not authorised by the Headmaster, will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

11. Truancy

- 11.1 Truancy from school or individual lessons will be taken very seriously. Parents will be informed of any truancy as soon as possible and appropriate sanctions will be put in place relative to the situation and reasons for the truancy.

11.2 All truancy will be recorded on the school MIS and actions taken recorded in individual boys files.