

FALCONHURST SCHOOL

Attendance

POLICY

‘Good for all and harms none’

Belonging, attending and thriving—every pupil, every day.



Policy owner	Headteacher
Monitoring responsibility	Full Governing Body
Approved by	Full Governing Body
Effective from	September 2026
Next review	September 2027
Review cycle	Annual, or sooner if guidance changes
Key guidance	Working Together to Improve School Attendance, July 2026

1. Purpose and principles

Regular attendance is essential to pupils' education, safeguarding, wellbeing and future life chances. Falconhurst School promotes a calm, safe, supportive and inclusive environment in which pupils belong and want to attend. Our values of Courage, Ambition, Determination and Success, together with 'Good for all and harms none', guide a relational approach: high expectations, early help, respectful partnership and proportionate action.

This policy applies to every pupil on the admission register, including Nursery pupils. The statutory duty on parents to secure regular attendance and attendance enforcement apply to children of compulsory school age. Nursery attendance is nevertheless registered and followed up because consistent attendance supports learning and unexplained absence may indicate a welfare concern.

2. Statutory framework

This policy has regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. It reflects the Education Act 1996; Education Act 2002; Education and Inspections Act 2006; Equality Act 2010; Children and Families Act 2014; School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024; Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024; and relevant statutory guidance on children missing education, medical conditions, health needs, suspensions and permanent exclusions, alternative provision and SEND.

The school will apply this policy fairly and consistently, consider individual circumstances, make reasonable adjustments for disability and avoid discrimination. The policy is published on the school website, shared on admission and highlighted at the start of each school year and when updated.

3. Our Working Together approach

Stage	Falconhurst action
Expect	Set and communicate high expectations; make school safe, welcoming and worth attending.
Monitor	Use accurate daily registers and weekly analysis to identify emerging individual, group and cohort patterns.
Listen and understand	Talk with pupils and families promptly and sensitively to identify barriers at home, in school or beyond.
Facilitate support	Remove in-school barriers, make reasonable adjustments and help families access early help, health, SEND, transport or other support.
Formalise support	Where absence persists, work with the local authority and partners through an attendance contract, education supervision order or other formal plan.
Enforce	Where support is inappropriate, unsuccessful or not engaged with, use a Notice to Improve, penalty notice referral or prosecution proportionately and in line with the local code of conduct.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Governing Body

- Promote attendance across the school's ethos and policies and hold leaders to account for statutory duties.

- Review attendance, persistent and severe absence, punctuality and group-level trends regularly, including equality and safeguarding considerations.
- Ensure the attendance strategy is adequately led, resourced and supported by appropriate staff training.
- Approve this policy and evaluate the impact of improvement activity.

4.2 Headteacher and Senior Attendance Champion

The Headteacher is the school's Senior Attendance Champion and has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. Day-to-day attendance work is led by the School Attendance and Family Welfare Officer (AFWO), Mrs Jessica Greig, 01908 679354, jgreig@falconhurstschool.co.uk.

- Set the vision, maintain effective systems and ensure all staff follow them.
- Oversee weekly analysis, targeted action and regular evaluation of impact.
- Build consistent relationships with families and liaise with the local authority School Attendance Support Team and other partners.
- Ensure safeguarding, SEND, medical, pupil premium and attendance work is coordinated.
- Decide leave-of-absence applications and whether to request legal intervention.

4.3 All staff

Attendance is everyone's responsibility. Teachers take accurate registers at the required time and raise emerging concerns. Office staff receive absence reports, complete first-day contact and maintain records. The DSL considers safeguarding implications; the SENCO and pastoral staff help identify and remove barriers. Staff communicate consistently and never promise that an absence will be authorised before the Headteacher's decision.

4.4 Parents and pupils

- Parents must ensure their child attends every session on time, unless an absence is authorised or another statutory reason applies.
- Parents must report an unexpected absence before 8.40am on every day of absence, explain the reason and expected return, and keep at least two emergency contacts current where reasonably possible.
- Appointments should be arranged outside school hours; when unavoidable, pupils should attend before or after the appointment and evidence may be requested.
- Leave must be requested in advance using the school form. A parent cannot authorise absence.
- Pupils should attend punctually, engage with agreed support and tell a trusted adult about barriers or worries.

5. School day, registration and punctuality

Item	Current arrangement
School day	8.40am to 3.10pm.
Expected arrival	By 8.55am.
Morning register	Taken at 8.40am for all pupils; closes at 9.10am.

Item	Current arrangement
Nursery afternoon session	Afternoon-only Nursery begins at 12.10pm. Arrival is recorded operationally, but the statutory afternoon register is taken at the school-wide time below.
Afternoon register	Taken at 1.15pm at the same time for all pupils, including Nursery pupils attending that afternoon; closes at 1.45pm.

A pupil arriving after the register is taken but before it closes is recorded L (late before closing). A pupil arriving after it closes is recorded U (late after closing), an unauthorised absence for that session, unless another code applies. Register opening periods are the same length and do not exceed 30 minutes. Persistent lateness is discussed with the family and addressed through the graduated support process.

The single school-wide afternoon registration time reflects the July 2026 clarification that the attendance register must be taken at the same time for all registered pupils. Leaders must ensure published operational routines and the management information system match these times.

6. Admission and attendance registers

The school keeps electronic admission and attendance registers. Every pupil, regardless of age, is entered on the admission register and their attendance is recorded at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session using the national codes in the 2024 Regulations and current DfE guidance.

- An entry is amended only where necessary; the original entry, amendment, reason, date, and name and position of the person making it are retained.
- Register data is retained for six years from the date of the entry and processed in accordance with data-protection law.
- A pupil's name is deleted from the admission register only when a ground in regulation 9 applies. The school makes required notifications and returns to the local authority.
- The school provides the Secretary of State and local authority with required attendance data and works with the local authority through targeting support meetings.

7. Reporting and following up absence

Absence may be reported on 01908 679354, office@falconhurstschool.co.uk or through the school's published online route. Office staff record the information and identify the appropriate code; code N is replaced as soon as the reason is known and no later than five working days after the session.

For every unexplained absence the school will make first-day contact that morning. If no responsible adult can be reached, staff will try all available contacts, review known risks and consult the DSL. Contact continues on each unexplained day. Proportionate action may include contacting a social worker or youth justice worker, a welfare visit, children's social care or police where there is an immediate concern. Decisions are recorded.

Unexplained or repeated absence is never treated as an administrative matter alone. It may be a warning sign of neglect, abuse, exploitation, criminal or sexual exploitation, bullying, mental ill health, domestic abuse, homelessness or other harm. The school follows KCSIE

2026, its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and children-missing-education procedures.

8. Authorised and unauthorised absence

8.1 Illness, medical appointments and evidence

Physical or mental illness is normally authorised using code I. Medical and dental appointments may be authorised using code M where the pupil is absent for the minimum necessary time. Parents should explain the symptoms or circumstances sufficiently for the school to decide the correct code.

Medical evidence is not routinely required. It may be requested only where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt, needs evidence to identify appropriate support, or absence is prolonged or repeated. Acceptable evidence is not limited to a GP letter and may include appointment information, prescriptions or other relevant material. The school will not impose a fixed five-day evidence rule or place unnecessary pressure on health services.

8.2 Leave of absence

The Headteacher may grant leave only in the specific circumstances permitted by the 2024 Regulations: participation in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad; an interview; study leave; a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable; or exceptional circumstances. Each application is decided in advance on its individual facts. The school does not operate a blanket policy, and no category of family event automatically attracts a set number of days.

A family holiday, affordability, availability of flights, birthdays or similar convenience will not normally be exceptional. Leave is not granted retrospectively and is not granted for protest activity during school hours. Where leave is granted, the Headteacher determines the number of sessions authorised. Unauthorised holiday is recorded G.

8.3 Religious observance, travelling families and exclusions

Code R is used only for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. Code T applies only where a mobile child is travelling with a parent for that parent's trade or business and the statutory conditions are met. A pupil suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision is recorded E; the school follows statutory education and safeguarding duties.

9. Supporting attendance

The school responds early and seeks to understand the cause, not merely the percentage. Support may include a consistent key adult, pastoral or wellbeing support, breakfast or transition arrangements, anti-bullying action, curriculum or environmental changes, reasonable adjustments, SEND support, an Individual Healthcare Plan, early help, transport advice, family support or referral to health and other services. Actions, owners, review dates and impact are recorded with the pupil and family.

9.1 SEND, disability and health

High expectations apply to all pupils, but processes are adapted to individual need. The school complies with the Equality Act 2010, makes reasonable adjustments and works with the SENCO, DSL, health professionals and local authority. Where a pupil with an EHC plan has falling attendance or barriers related to need, the school informs the local authority and

considers whether plan review is required. Absence is not automatically authorised merely because a pupil has SEND or a health condition.

9.2 Part-time timetables and remote education

A part-time timetable is not used to manage behaviour or as a long-term solution. It is exceptional, temporary, agreed with the parent and, where appropriate, the pupil and relevant professionals, and forms part of a plan to return to full-time education as soon as possible. It has clear hours, objectives, safeguarding arrangements, review dates and an end date; code C2 is used only for sessions the pupil is not expected to attend under the agreed timetable.

Remote education does not replace attendance. It is used only as a last resort, for a limited period, where attendance is not possible or contrary to the pupil's best interests, and as part of a plan to reintegrate the pupil into face-to-face education.

9.3 Reintegration

After lengthy or unavoidable absence, the school plans a supportive return with the pupil and family, addresses learning and relationship gaps and reviews progress. Adjustments are individual, time limited where appropriate and do not reduce the pupil's entitlement without lawful justification.

10. Monitoring and use of data

- The AFWO checks registers and unexplained absence daily and analyses individual, group, year and cohort patterns weekly, including punctuality.
- Leaders analyse half-termly, termly and full-year trends, benchmark appropriately and look beyond headline percentages to sessions missed and barriers.
- Reports are shared with class teachers, the Headteacher, DSL, SENCO, pupil premium lead and governors as appropriate, respecting data protection.
- Persistent absence means missing 10% or more of possible sessions; severe absence means missing 50% or more. Support intensifies before and after these thresholds and does not wait for them to be crossed.
- The school gives particular attention to pupils with a social worker, young carers, pupils with SEND or health needs, disadvantaged pupils and any locally identified vulnerable cohort.

Parents receive regular, understandable information about time missed and its effect on learning. The school avoids relying on a percentage without context. Intervention impact is reviewed; if an approach is not working, the pupil, family and partners reconsider the barriers and adjust support.

11. Formal support and legal intervention

Where voluntary help is ineffective or not engaged with, the school works with Milton Keynes City Council to formalise support. Options include an attendance contract, an education supervision order, statutory social-care involvement where safeguarding thresholds are met, a Notice to Improve, a penalty notice or prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Enforcement is not a substitute for reasonable support and is used only when appropriate and proportionate.

11.1 National Framework for Penalty Notices

For a child of compulsory school age, the school must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate when there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-school-week period. The period may span terms or school years and may combine types of unauthorised absence. The local authority may also act below the threshold where its code permits, for example deliberate repeated absence designed to avoid it.

The school considers whether support is appropriate, has been provided and engaged with; whether a penalty notice is likely to improve attendance; whether another intervention is preferable; and Equality Act duties. A Notice to Improve will usually provide a final opportunity to engage with support where support is appropriate, normally over three to six school weeks, but is not required where support would be inappropriate, such as an unauthorised holiday.

Occurrence within three years	Penalty for each liable parent, for the same pupil
First penalty notice	£80 if paid within 21 days; £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second penalty notice	£160 payable within 28 days; no reduced rate.
Third threshold reached	No third penalty notice may be issued; the local authority considers prosecution or another legal intervention.

Separate penalty notices may be issued when a parent allows a pupil to be in a public place without reasonable justification during the first five school days of a suspension or permanent exclusion after being notified of the restriction. The current penalty is £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. These notices sit outside the attendance National Framework and its two-notice limit. All issue and payment decisions follow the current local code of conduct and legislation.

12. Promoting attendance

The school teaches and communicates the benefits of attendance and recognises improvement, resilience and collective success. Any praise or incentive is inclusive, sensitive and non-discriminatory. Pupils are not blamed or shamed for absence outside their control, and rewards do not disadvantage pupils with disability, illness, religious observance or other protected circumstances. Celebration is secondary to relationships, good provision and effective support.

13. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and AFWO monitor implementation and report to governors. The policy is reviewed annually, after a relevant legal or guidance change, or where evaluation identifies a weakness. Pupil and parent views inform review. Operational contact details and times are checked before publication.

14. Related policies

Child Protection and Safeguarding; Behaviour; SEND; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions; Children Missing Education procedures; Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions; Equality; Data Protection; Online Safety; and Remote Education.

Appendix 1 National attendance codes

Code	Use
/ and \	Present at morning / afternoon registration.
L	Late before the register closes.
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority.
V	Attending an educational visit or trip.
P	Participating in an approved supervised sporting activity.
W	Attending approved work experience.
B	Attending another approved educational activity.
D	Dual registered and attending the other registered school.
C1	Leave for a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave for a medical or dental appointment.
J1	Leave to attend an interview.
S	Study leave for a public examination.
X	Non-compulsory-school-age pupil not required to attend.
C2	Leave for a compulsory-school-age pupil on an agreed temporary part-time timetable.
C	Leave granted for exceptional circumstances.
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes; statutory conditions apply.
R	Religious observance on a day exclusively set apart.
I	Illness, physical or mental.
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made.
Q	Unable to attend because of a qualifying lack of local-authority access arrangements.
Y1	Transport normally provided is unavailable.
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel caused by an emergency.
Y3	Part of the school premises is closed and the pupil cannot practicably be accommodated.
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed.
Y5	Pupil in criminal justice detention.
Y6	Attendance would be contrary to public-health guidance or law.
Y7	Another unavoidable cause not covered by another code.
G	Holiday not granted by the school.
N	Reason for absence not yet established; replace within five working days.

Code	Use
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances; unauthorised.
U	Arrived after the register closed, before the session ended; unauthorised.
Z	Prospective pupil not yet on the admission register.
#	Planned whole-school closure.

Appendix 2 Parent quick guide

If...	Please...
Your child is unexpectedly absent	Contact school before 8.40am every day, explain why and say when they are likely to return.
Your child has an appointment	Tell school in advance; arrange it outside school time where possible and bring the child before or after it.
You wish to request leave	Submit the school form before making arrangements. Only the Headteacher may authorise leave, and only permitted circumstances apply.
Attendance or punctuality is becoming difficult	Contact Mrs Jessica Greig promptly so barriers can be understood and support agreed.
Your details change	Update the school immediately and provide at least two emergency contacts where reasonably possible.

Reference framework

Department for Education, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, July 2026; Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026; School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024; Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024; statutory guidance on children missing education and supporting pupils with medical conditions.