

 John Ferneley College  
**Attendance Policy**

Reviewed by: Phil Kruse  
Reviewed date: October 2019

The Law states as a parent, you are legally responsible for making sure your child attends school. Failure to do so may result in legal action. Missing school causes severe disruption to a child's education, and affects their performance in exams and chances later in life. More information can be found at [www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence](http://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence).

### **Aims**

At John Ferneley College we recognise that regular attendance is crucial in order for our students to reach their full potential. It influences the levels of attainment, relationships with peers, enjoyment of college and future opportunities. Every single day is an entitlement for each student.

The college will consistently work towards high attendance figures for all our students. We recognise the need for students, parents and the college to work in close partnership to achieve this. In addition, to support these efforts we employ an Attendance Officer.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this policy is written to reflect these laws and guidance set out by The Department of Education.

### **Procedures**

#### **Registration**

Morning registration takes place in tutor time at the start of school and will be taken at 8.45am. Any student arriving after this time will be marked late unless there is an acceptable explanation. Afternoon registration takes place at the start of lesson 3. Registers are also taken at the start of every lesson.

#### **Absence**

All absences will be marked as either authorised or unauthorised. If an explanation for an absence is not received or the explanation deemed unsatisfactory then that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised.

Parents/carers are asked to contact the college on the absence line before 8.30am to report an absence providing a reason. If no contact is made explaining an absence then the college will send a text home to secure an explanation. A phone call should be made on each day of absence unless previously agreed to by the Head Teacher, Attendance Officer or in exceptional circumstances. A doctor's note or medical evidence will be needed for absences of more than 5 days. Evidence will be required for all absences where possible to support students throughout their time at John Ferneley College.

If attendance falls below The College target of 96% a letter will be sent home to inform parents/carers of the current level and possible further actions this may lead to if attendance does not improve. Support will also be offered to help improve their attendance. For example in college meetings/phone calls home and home visits. It is the role of the Attendance Officer to monitor, be aware of and bring to attention any emerging attendance concerns.

Persistent Absence (PA) defined in legislation as 10% or more absences. Either authorised or unauthorised, a child who is persistently absent is at risk of failing to achieve their full potential in college. At this point an absence will only be authorised with evidence to back up why a student is not in college such as an appointment card, prescription or medicine labels.

If attendance continues to fall without sufficient evidence The College will send a second letter informing parents that unless there is an improvement the case will be passed on to The L.E.A. where appropriate action and support will be implemented.

### **Lateness**

Pupils arriving after the close of register at 8.45am will be marked as late. Any student that arrives later than 9.05am must sign in at reception or the attendance office. The college keeps a record of lateness and will use appropriate sanctions or support to reduce this.

### **Absence from college**

All requests for students to be absent from college must be requested through writing, email or a telephone conversation with the attendance team. This is necessary for all absences except for illness.

### **Term-Time Holidays**

Legally Term Time holidays and extended leave are not allowed and **will not be authorised** as stated in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. If parents/carers take their child out of college the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and will be referred to The L.E.A. and could result in a penalty notice.

Parents/carers may request permission from the Head to take their child out of school during term time. In turn a response will be made. It is at the Head's discretion whether absences may be authorised but this would only be in exceptional circumstances and in line with DfE guidelines.

### **The Attendance Officer**

The Attendance Officer (AO) reviews the attendance regularly and supports students in order to improve their attendance. The AO works closely with those students with attendance concerns and investigates students who are consistently absent, which is taken very seriously. Furthermore the AO sees and supports students at school, visits home and is a key component in our efforts to secure high attendance.

In extreme cases the Attendance Officer also initiates legal proceedings against parents who have not fulfilled their responsibility for getting their child into college. Before a case goes to court attendance levels will be monitored, setting targets for attendance levels; their intervention may also lead to a fixed penalty notice. The main aim of all action is to get a child to attend school on a regular basis.

### **Responsibilities**

In order to achieve high attendance figures the college endeavours to work closely with parents/carers. To this end we ask parent to:

- Ensure that their child attends regularly. Parents of students must by law send their children to college and risk prosecution if they do not do so.
- Parents must ensure that their child arrives on time form morning registration, it is a legal obligation.
- Parents/carers must notify the college on each day of absence by 8.30am.
- Parents should not organise holidays during term time.
- Make contact and inform the college at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attitude towards college

**In return the college will:**

- Contact home over any unauthorised absences or attendance concerns
- Follow up promptly any concerns raised by students/parents that could impact on a student's attendance.
- Offer support and advice to improve a child's attendance
- Keep parents and students regularly informed of the child's attendance figures.
- Reward excellent or improving attendance.

# Attendance policy: coronavirus addendum

This addendum supports our college's attendance policy in clearly outlining the processes that will be followed in recording attendance, in line with the Government's guidance, as well as ensuring college attendance is maximised for those groups expected to be in present.

This addendum applies from w/c 15th June 2020. It will be in operation until further notice and will be reviewed in line with the Government's reviews of legislation and guidance in the coming weeks and months.

There may be circumstances where it is necessary for the college to close to some or all groups of students, i.e. where we are instructed to close by the Local Authority or the Trust in the event of a localised Coronavirus outbreak. In the event of this happening, the provisions of this addendum will be suspended in part or whole for the duration of the college closure.

## Our Guiding Principles

- 1) We will follow Government guidance on the wider opening of our college; however, we have made local decisions about the extent of provision that can be offered to families. This is to maintain the health and safety of our children and staff and is a function of the college building(s) as well as the resources available to us.
- 2) We will continue to provide educational childcare provision for students with EHCPs and those identified as vulnerable.
- 3) The college will seek to open the college to more students where possible and where all limitations have been taken into consideration. Parents and carers will be informed of any changes to those eligible in the event of this being possible.

## College responsibilities and guidance

- Resume taking the attendance register using college admin systems like SIMs.
- Contacting parents when absence (for eligible groups) is not known/pre-arranged.
- Continue to submit daily attendance figures using the educational setting status form by midday every day or
- Submit attendance to The Local Authority of those students deemed as vulnerable, having an EHCP or social care involvement.

## Parental responsibilities and advice from The DfE

### Is attendance compulsory?

Eligible children - including priority groups - are strongly encouraged to attend their educational setting, unless they are self-isolating, or they are clinically vulnerable.

No one with symptoms should attend a setting for any reason. If someone in their household is extremely clinically vulnerable, children should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions.

Families should notify their school as normal if their child is unable to attend so that staff can explore the reason with them and address barriers together.

Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.

### **Will parents be penalised if their child does not attend school?**

Parents will not be penalised if their child does not attend school. We expect schools and other relevant partners to work with and support the relevant families and pupils to return to school.

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, we have relaxed the law, so that the parent of a child of compulsory school age is not guilty of an offence on account of the child's failure to attend regularly at the school at which the child is registered (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

### **Can the children of critical workers and vulnerable children still attend school, even if they are not in priority years?**

Yes. Now that we have made progress in reducing the transmission of coronavirus we are encouraging all eligible children to attend settings (where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household), even if parents are able to keep their children at home.

Vulnerable children and young people of all year groups are expected to attend educational provision where it is appropriate for them to do so. Further guidance on vulnerable children at [Supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus outbreak](#).

### **Additional notes and guidance from The DfE**

DfE guidance is applicable to 30 June 2020 and will be reviewed before 1 July 2020.

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, we have disapplied certain statutory provisions, so that the parent of a child of compulsory school age is not guilty of an offence on account of the child's failure to attend regularly at the school at which the child is registered (section 444 of the Education Act 1996). This means that parents will not be penalised if their child does not attend school.

We have also modified the meaning of 'pupil' (section 3 of the Education Act 1996) in the context of pupil registration (section 434 of the Education Act 1996). This means that children temporarily attending another school because of coronavirus (COVID-19), should not be registered as pupils. They should return to their own school once it reopens.

Children who attend a school on a temporary basis because of coronavirus will still be pupils for all purposes other than registration. For example, they will still be pupils for the purposes of the school's SEN, safeguarding and school medical duties. The school will be able to apply its normal behaviour policy to such children and - as is the case with its registered pupils - it cannot charge these children for their education.

### Absence codes

Attendance and absence codes to be used when completing the register.

### Definitions

- Eligible year groups: nursery, year R, year 1, year 6, year 10 and year 12
- Priority groups: children of critical workers and vulnerable children

Scenario	Code	Definition	Online form
Pupils who are not eligible to attend a session, including pupils who aren't: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In an eligible year group or priority group</li> <li>• Expected to attend that particular session e.g. if you're operating a rota and the pupils aren't expected to be in that session</li> </ul>	X	Not required to be in school	N/A
Pupils who have to shield because they are classed as <u>clinically extremely vulnerable</u>	Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Note if the absence is due to shielding or isolation
Pupils who have to self-isolate because they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are <u>clinically vulnerable</u></li> <li>• Live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable</li> <li>• Have symptoms of coronavirus, or live with someone who does</li> </ul>	Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Note if the absence is due to shielding or isolation
Pupils who have to stay at home because they have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and their risk assessment says they can't safely attend school	Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	N/A
Pupils who are absent due to illness	I	Illness	Note if the illness involves coronavirus symptoms
Pupils who are eligible but do not attend and it's not for any of the reasons above	C	Authorised leave of absence	N/A

Pupils who are attending another school (where they are registered), e.g. a pupil referral unit (PRU)	D	Dual registered	N/A
Pupils who are attending a host school on a temporary basis (where they are not registered) because the home school cannot accommodate them safely	B	Off-site educational activity	Host school to include the child in their daily totals

**Note:** The host school does not need to add these pupils to their attendance register, but they should:

- Record their attendance for safeguarding purposes
- Notify the home school of any absences

**Approved by:** Karen Lambert **Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020

**Last reviewed on:** 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020

**Next review due by:** 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020