



# Falkland Islands Schools

## Attendance Policy

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## 1. Aims

Good attendance at school is strongly linked to educational achievement and is the single most important factor to ensure that children and young people have optimal life chances.

**The Falkland Islands Schools expect students to have attendance of 93% or higher.**

This policy provides a supporting framework for the prioritisation of attendance setting out the legal position and guidance for managing and encouraging good school attendance.

The Falkland Islands Schools are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Education Ordinance (1989) and Education (Governance and Accountability) Ordinance 2022, incorporating all subsequent amendments.

### **Falkland Islands Education Ordinance**

Education (Governance and Accountability) Ordinance 2022:

**Section 7** sets out the duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory education age, ensuring they receive an efficient education.

**Section 7.3** defines that a child or young person becomes of compulsory education age at the start of the academic year in which they attain the age of five and ceases to be of compulsory education age at the end of the academic year in which they attain the age of sixteen.

**Section 7.4** notes that a person who fails to comply commits an offence.

Education Ordinance (1989):

**Section 22** sets out the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory education age to ensure that that child regularly attends school unless by any provision of this Ordinance he is excused from so doing. If a pupil is going to be absent for more than two consecutive school days, parents must inform the Principal, giving reasons and likely length of absence. When a child returns from an absence the parent must give the reasons for the absence.

For the purposes of the Ordinance, “regularly” in relation to attendance at school, means punctual attendance on each day of the school year, as set out in the regulations.

**Section 22 (6)** notes that a person who fails to comply commits an offence

**Section 25** sets out the provisions in the Ordinance for the Director of Education to issue a School Attendance Order. If a parent fails to perform their duty under Section 7 above, a School Attendance Order may be issued, failure to comply is an offence.

**Section 26** sets out that a parent who fails to secure regular attendance of their child at school, commits an offence.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The Falkland Islands School Governance Committee**

The Falkland Islands School Governance Committee (FISGC) is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. The FISGC holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

#### **3.2 The Principal**

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to FISGC
- Notifying the Director of Education of absences that occasion further action, inclusive of the issuing of an Attendance Order
- Notifying Social Services of occasions whereby lack of attendance causes a concern for safeguarding.

#### **3.3 The Deputy Principal (IJS&CE) and the Deputy Principal/Assistant Principal (FICS)**

The Deputy Principal (IJS&CE) and the Deputy Principal/Asst. Principal (FICS) are responsible for:

- The day-to-day operation of this policy.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students.

#### **3.4 The School Secretary**

The School Secretary:

- Checks registers and student absence on a daily basis, at the beginning of each session.
- Follows up on any children who are expected at school but do not arrive, by telephoning until they contact the parent/carers to check on the child's safety and whereabouts
- Takes and makes calls from/to parents about absence and records this on SIMS / Epraise

#### **3.5 Pastoral Team led by Deputy Principal (FICS) and the Deputy Principal (IJS&CE)**

The Pastoral Teacher (FICS):

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Deputy Principal/Assistant Principal
- Works with Deputy Principal/Assistant Principal to tackle persistent absence by arranging communications with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Deputy Principal when attendance reaches agreed thresholds

#### **3.6 Class teachers / Form Tutors**

- Class teachers and Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via SIMS (IJS&CE) and Epraise (FICS), within 5 minutes of the register closing.
- Class teachers and Form Tutors will make children aware of the importance of good attendance, link it to good outcomes and praise children who attend well

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

The Falkland Islands School will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

The school will take our attendance register at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions of each school day. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See Appendix 1 for the IJS&CE attendance codes (codes may vary from time to time).

See Appendix 2 for the FICS attendance codes (codes may vary from time to time).

Arrive in school by	Morning register opens	Morning register closes	Afternoon register opens	Afternoon register closes
EYFS	8.45	8.50	1.15	1.25
KS1 & KS2	8.55	9.05	1.25	1.35
FICS	8.30	8.40	1.30	1.40

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.15am or as soon as practically possible. Absence is to be notified by contacting the school office on the telephone or via email.

IJS&CE Telephone 27294 email [secretary@primary.ac.fk](mailto:secretary@primary.ac.fk)

FICS Telephone 27147 email [secretary@secondary.ac.fk](mailto:secretary@secondary.ac.fk)

An absence due to illness will be marked as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. A note will be added to the register.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The school will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified.

### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment at KEMH will be marked as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, parents/carers are encouraged to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also notify the school for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school may authorise.

#### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L).

**FICS only** - Students who arrive late to three sessions or more between Monday and Friday will be detained after school on the Friday of that week. This will be until 4.30pm and the student's parent/carer will be informed by email or phone call.

#### 4.5 Following up absence

Where any child who is expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the following actions will be taken:

- Office staff will follow up on the student's absence by telephoning until they contact the parent/carers to check on the child's safety and ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance information is reported at least termly to parents. Parents/carers may check their child's attendance at any point by contacting the school office:

IJS&CE Telephone 27294 email [secretary@primary.ac.fk](mailto:secretary@primary.ac.fk)

FICS Telephone 27147 email [secretary@secondary.ac.fk](mailto:secretary@secondary.ac.fk)

At FICS, parents/carers may log into Epraise [Home | epraise.co.uk](http://Home | epraise.co.uk) to check attendance.

### 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Regardless of whether a student's absence from school is 'authorised' or 'unauthorised', the fact remains that the student is absent from school and will not benefit from learning or development opportunities. The impact of school absence is cumulative, the greater the absence rate, the greater the negative impact on the student's outcomes. Research strongly documents the negative impact of student absenteeism on academic achievement.

#### 5.1 Student absence marked as 'authorised' during term-time

The Principal will only agree to categorise an absence during term time as 'authorised' if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Categorising absence as 'authorised' is at the Principal's discretion. There is no appeal process.

Falkland Islands Schools defines 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- The bereavement or serious illness of a close relative;
- Medical needs where treatment is required in the UK or prolonged treatment in the Falklands.

The Principal will consider each request for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances, relevant context and implications for the student.

#### Valid reasons for authorised absence may include, but are not limited to:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Out of school programmes, i.e. being selected to represent a youth group at a specific event, for example representing the Scout group at a memorial occasion; taking part in a musical, art

or sporting event where they perform at a high standard (evidence of this event may be required).

- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Camp resident children who move between Camp and Stanley House by FIGAS at the start and end of a holiday where they have no control over the flight schedule
- Children going on holiday outside of the Falkland Islands that require RAF Airbridge or LATAM flights; providing these flights are adjacent to the first or last week of a school term i.e., a family holiday is booked to mainly coincide with school holidays
- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.

**Unauthorised absence would include:**

- A child’s or parents’ birthday
- Term time holidays
- Tagging a long holiday onto an overseas event that might be categorised as ‘authorised’ i.e. taking a long holiday after taking part in an overseas event lengthening the student’s absence from school.

**5.2 Homework during a school absence**

It is not the school’s policy to provide homework for students who are going on holiday during term time, this strategy does not mitigate the negative impact of the student’s absence.

**5.3 Reducing persistent absence**

It is the legal duty of the parent/carer of every child of compulsory education age who is a registered to ensure that their child regularly attends school. Below are the key milestones at which the Falkland Islands Schools will act to support parents/carers fulfil their duty.

The legal meaning of ‘regular’ attendance means punctual attendance on all school days.

**The Falkland Islands Schools expect students to have attendance of 93% or higher.**

Attendance is monitored and where there are individual areas of concern, the school will contact parents to discuss it.

Future attendance calculations will be carried out at the end of Term 1.1 (to negate false attendance triggers) and will be continuous until the end of Term 3.2. Attendance statistics are cumulative.

Actions to be taken:

Attendance falls below %	Definition	Normal action by the school
93%	<b>Stage 1</b> Absence causing concern	1. Letter to parent/carer 2. Phone call with Deputy Principal / Pastoral Leader
88%	<b>Stage 2</b> Persistent absence	1. Letter to parent/carer 2. Attendance review meeting with Deputy

		Principal / Head of Pastoral Care
<b>83%</b>	<b>Stage 3</b> Beyond persistent absence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Letter to parent/carer</li> <li>2. Attendance review meeting with Principal</li> </ol>
<b>80%</b>	<b>Stage 4</b> Safeguarding concern	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Letter to parent/carer</li> <li>2. Potential referral to Social Services as a child's entitlement to Education is being withheld</li> <li>3. Principal report to Director of Education</li> <li>4. Director may issue an Attendance Order under the Education Ordinance.</li> <li>5. Parent/s must comply with the attendance order within 14 days</li> <li>6. Failure to comply is an offence under the Education Ordinance.</li> </ol>

#### 5.4 Legal

There are 190 days in every academic year on which children of compulsory school age are required to attend, unless they are, for any reason, lawfully excused from attendance by the Principal.

A student is required to attend school until they have completed the transition programme under the direction of Falkland College. The last day of the transition programme is considered as the last day of their compulsory education.

If the Principal is not satisfied with the attendance of a student they will write to the Director of Education outlining:

- The attendance rate of the student
- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If it appears to the Director of Education that the parent/carer of any child of compulsory education age is failing to perform the duty imposed on them in ensuring that their child is receiving an efficient education, then they will issue a School Attendance Order. Parents have a 14 day period to comply with the order. Failure to do so is an offence under the Education Ordinance.

#### 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Falkland Islands Schools will promote good attendance by ensuring that the school is a place to which the children want to come, where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; and a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and varied curriculum.



The Falkland Islands Schools use evidence-based research to inform the attendance policy and strategies for promoting good attendance. The EEF REA report from 2022 notes that targeted parental communication and engagement approaches have a positive impact on attendance.

*A key component of the interventions [to improve school attendance] was building effective partnerships between schools and parents, through discussions, meetings and conferences. The purpose of these partnerships was to identify issues leading to absences and collaboratively source effective solutions to the problems.*

*EEF REA Report 2022*

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the school, to build effective partnerships with us and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school.

All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance, link it to good outcomes and praise children who attend well. At FICS Epraise awards House Points for good attendance. Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports and is discussed at parent meeting.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

A student's parent/carer is expected to call the school by 8.15am or as soon as is practicable, if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2). This is expected on every day that a child will be absent unless the parent/carer has communicated a day that the child will return i.e., 48 hours following last bout of an infectious/contagious disease.

The persistent absence threshold is 12%. The persistent absence threshold is higher than comparator schools in England (where it is 10%) to take into account the unique Falklands context, where travel to and from the Islands is lengthy, expensive and time consuming. If a student's individual overall absence rate is over 12%, the student is categorised as a **persistent absentee**.

Attendance data will be collected each term and published in the Principal's Report to FISGC.

We use attendance data to:

- Track the attendance of individual students
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis or if any reviews to the Education Ordinance take place, impacting on the content. At every review, the policy will be presented to the FISGC.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies / legal documents:

- Falkland Islands Schools Child protection and Safeguarding policy
- Education Ordinance 1989
- Education (Governance and Accountability) Ordinance 2022

## Appendix 1: IJS&CE attendance codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Student arrives late
Authorised absence		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>D</b>	Dental/Medical appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Student has been excluded
<b>G</b>	Compassionate leave/family	Bereavement / serious illness family member
<b>H</b>	Holiday (Authorised)	See 5.1 (above)
<b>M</b>	Illness/sickness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
<b>S</b>	Medical overseas / Hospital Stay	Student is unwell and receiving medical treatment in hospital or overseas
<b>P</b>	Phone lessons	Camp Education – telephone lessons
<b>V</b>	Visiting Teacher	Camp Education – Visiting Teacher
<b>W</b>	Work set	Camp Education – Work set
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>T</b>	Travel / Camp absence	See 5.1 (above)
<b>I</b>	Interview	
Unauthorised absence		
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence, including unauthorised holiday
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age - COVID-19 related	
<b>7</b>	Illness - COVID-19	
<b>8</b>	Self-isolating - COVID-19	
<b>9</b>	Shielding - COVID-19	

## Appendix 2: FICS attendance codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Internal exclusion	Student is present at school but is supervised outside of their usual timetable
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded
H	Compassionate Leave	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to bereavement or family illness
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
T	Camp absence	See 5.1 (above)
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
G	Holiday (Unauthorised)	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school See 5.1 (above)
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their Public or Pre-Public Examinations
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age or COVID-19 related; is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

### Appendix 3: Attendance actions

Attendance falls below %	Definition	Normal action by the school
93%	<b>Stage 1</b> Absence causing concern	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Letter to parent/carer</li> <li>2. Phone call with Deputy Principal / Pastoral Leader</li> </ol>
88%	<b>Stage 2</b> Persistent absence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Letter to parent/carer</li> <li>2. Attendance review meeting with Deputy Principal / Head of Pastoral Care</li> </ol>
83%	<b>Stage 3</b> Beyond persistent absence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Letter to parent/carer</li> <li>2. Attendance review meeting with Principal</li> </ol>
80%	<b>Stage 4</b> Safeguarding concern	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Letter to parent/carer</li> <li>2. Potential referral to Social Services as a child's entitlement to Education is being withheld</li> <li>3. Principal report to Director of Education</li> <li>4. Director may issue an Attendance Order under the Education Ordinance.</li> <li>5. Parent/s must comply with the attendance order within 14 days</li> <li>6. Failure to comply is an offence under the Education Ordinance.</li> </ol>

## Appendix 4: Holiday form



# Falkland Islands Schools Holiday form

It is accepted that families face a dilemma about when to take family holidays and this is not made any easier by the cost of flying from the Falkland Islands to South America, Europe or beyond. However, it is a fact that students who have low attendance have a significant disadvantage when compared to their attending peers. Students with low attendance will struggle to make the expected level of progress and attain within their potential.

Non-attendance in education is not only damaging to the individual, but also to wider groups because non-attending students require additional study materials to catch up to their peers, which adds to teacher work load and creates disruption to the normal programme of study.

We ask all parents to support a culture of good attendance, especially in examination years, so disruption can be kept to a minimum and an atmosphere of success is achieved.

**Please fill out the Holiday Form to the best of your ability giving as much detail as possible taking into consideration the following:**

- It not anticipated that parents would consider removing any Year 10 or Year 11 student from school during the vital 2 years of examination preparation.
- Approval cannot be given retrospectively.
- Please give as much notice as possible of your intention for a term time holiday.
- This form is only to be used for extended periods of absence. Notification of absence due to illness should be through the school secretary.

<b>Name of Student:</b>		<b>Date of Birth:</b>
<b>Total Days Absence:</b>	<b>Absence Start Date:</b>	<b>Return to School Date:</b>
<b>Reason for Holiday planned for during term time:</b>		<b>Absence authorised? (Office use only)</b>
		Authorised
		Unauthorised
		<b>Acknowledged? (Office use only – name – date)</b>
<b>Parent/carer signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>
<b>Print Name:</b>		

## **Appendix 5: Reply to holiday form**

Dear

Thank you for your holiday form.

In line with the Falkland Islands Schools attendance policy, taking children out of school for a holiday during term time is marked as an unauthorised absence on the school's register. We understand that there are times when parents may need to take children out of school during term time, but we encourage holidays to be taken during our school holidays.

The school's attendance policy can be found on the website.

It is not school policy to provide homework when children are taken out of school during term time for a holiday.

Kind regards

School Secretary

## Appendix 6: Attendance Letter 1/2/3/4

IJS&CE / FICS

Falkland Islands Schools



Dear Parent/Carer's name

Date:

### Attendance / Punctuality Letter 1/2/3/4

At the Falkland Islands Schools, we view good attendance for all students as crucial in order to ensure the best chances for your children to make good progress and achieve their potential. We track children's school attendance and our system alerts us when a pupil's attendance is lower than we'd expect. I am obliged to advise you that the law states that it is the parents' duty to ensure their children regularly attend school; currently the law defines 'regularly' as punctually attending all sessions falling within a school term.

I am writing to you to inform you that your child's current school attendance is %. Currently your child's attendance is at Stage 1/2/3/4 of our processes.

*Please delete appropriate paragraphs - depending on stage*

Stage 1: It is concerning that your child's school attendance rate is below our target attendance rate of 93%. Your child has missed X sessions. The school is able to provide informal support to help improve attendance. If you wish to access this, please let us know. If your child's attendance rate does not improve, we will move to Stage 2 of our attendance process.

Stage 2: Your child's attendance rate is below 88%. Your child has missed X sessions. This level of absence is categorised as 'persistent absence'. We would like to invite you in for an attendance review meeting on X date/time/location. Our Deputy Principal / Pastoral Leader will meet you to work together to find solutions to support your child to improve their attendance.

Stage 3: Your child's attendance rate is below 83%. Your child has missed X sessions. This is a highly concerning level of absence which will have a significant negative impact on your child's outcomes. We would like to invite you in for an attendance review meeting on X date/time/location. The Principal will meet you to work together to find solutions to support your child to improve their attendance.

Stage 4: Your child's attendance rate is below 80%. This high level of absenteeism may trigger a report to the Director of Education, who will consider the circumstances of this case and may issue you with an attendance order. An attendance order is a legal requirement which you will have 14 days to comply with. Not complying with the attendance order is an offence under the Education Ordinance.

At the Falkland Islands Schools, we strive to achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people and positive school attendance and attainment is at the forefront of our efforts. If you have any questions about the attendance process, please speak to us at the earliest possible opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Add signature,

Add name & job title