



## Attendance Policy

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## Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Roles and responsibilities	3
3. Recording attendance	4
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	5
5. Strategies for promoting attendance	7
6. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school	7
7. Monitoring Attendance	7
8. Monitoring Arrangements	8
9. Links with other policies	8
Appendix 1: Attendance codes	
Appendix 2: Legislation and Guidance	

### 1. Aims

**At Fortismere School, we prioritise excellent attendance and punctuality for all students, from Year 7 to Year 13.**

We hold high expectations in these areas because regular, on-time attendance is crucial for students to gain the full benefits of their education. Missing lessons can leave students at a disadvantage, making it harder for them to reach their full potential.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance and through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students
- Providing a stimulating education experience for our students
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality and the benefits of good attendance and punctuality
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school

### 2. Roles and responsibilities

**Parents/Carers:** Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day and on time
- Report any absence – by email using the address registered with the school at the time of admission (if this changes contact school so that we can update records) or call the school to report the absence before **8.30am** on the first day of the absence and each subsequent day and advise when their child is expected to return. For long term absences parents will be informed of reporting procedures
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Ensure that their child is not taken out of school for a holiday

- Work with the school when there are concerns regarding attendance. This may include attending meetings during the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the child's tutor in the first instance.

*Note:* Responsibility for ensuring attendance lies with parents, which includes caregivers or anyone with parental responsibility. In this policy we use the term parent to cover all these people

**Students** including Sixth Form students are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Attend all lessons on time
- Speak to a trusted adult in school if they have any attendance concerns

**The governing board** is responsible for:

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties as set out in the policy
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across school policies and ethos
- Regularly monitoring, reviewing and challenging attendance figures across the school
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

**The Headteacher** is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at Fortismere
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices and/or authorising the school Attendance Lead to be able to do so
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality to students and parents through all available channels regularly

**The Designated Senior Leader for attendance** is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school, setting attendance targets, and making sure that the importance of school attendance is promoted across the school
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis with a focus on identified groups, persistent absentees and Children Missing Education (CME)
- Devising in collaboration with the Parental and Student Engagement Lead, Senior Mental Health Lead, AHT Inclusion and AHT SENDCo specific strategies to address poor attendance and punctuality
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff

**The Parental and Student Engagement lead** is responsible for:

- Meeting with students and parents where there are attendance concerns
- Conducting home visits in order to support families where there are barriers to attendance
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader for attendance
- Working with Haringey Education Welfare Officers and other external agencies to tackle persistent and severe absence
- Working with students and families to support in overcoming barriers to good attendance and punctuality
- Advising the Headteacher/Designated Senior Leader when to issue fixed-penalty notices

**The Attendance Administrator** is responsible for:

- Taking calls and emails from parents/carers about absence on a daily basis and recording these on SIMS
- Following up any unexplained absences, including sending out daily attendance text alerts to parents when a student has an unexplained absence

The Attendance Administrator can be contacted via [attendance@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:attendance@fortismere.org.uk)

**Form tutors and class teachers** are responsible for:

- Communicating by phone, email or by meeting with parents/carers and students to discuss attendance issues. This may be with a Head of Department or with a Head of Year
- Delivering messages to all students that promote the importance of good attendance
- Accurately taking the register for each session

**Heads of Year/Pastoral Support Managers/Heads of Department** are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data for their year group/subject area
- Working in collaboration with colleagues to support student attendance especially for identified groups/ individuals
- Ensuring that good or improved attendance is promoted and rewarded
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues

### **3. Recording attendance**

#### **Attendance register**

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all students onto this register. Attendance registers are saved on SIMS.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and in afternoon Form Time. The register will be marked, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes, to show 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 DfE attendance and absence codes.*

We will also record:

- Whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised
- Where a student is attending an approved educational activity, the nature of the activity
- Where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances, the nature of the circumstances

**The school day starts at 8.35am and ends at 3.10pm on Monday-Thursday and 2.30pm on Friday. Students must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.**

#### **Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school of the reason for any unplanned absence on the first day of absence by 8.30am by emailing the Attendance Lead on [attendance@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:attendance@fortismere.org.uk) explaining the reason for absence.

The school will mark absence due to illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the absence is in doubt the school may ask

parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or another appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this. The school will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

### **Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised absence as long as the parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, parents 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. If an appointment during school hours is unavoidable then parents must notify the school Attendance Improvement Lead in advance. The student will sign out and back in to school via South Wing reception.

Parents must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the planned absence. Section 5 sets out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

A student who arrives to school late:

- **Before the register has closed at 9.10am** will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- **After the register has closed** will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

### **Late detentions**

Any student who is late to school (after 8.35am) will receive a same day late detention with their PSM/HOY. This will be for 15 minutes at the end of the school day. Students who are persistently late will attend an after school detention for an hour on Friday. Parents will be notified via Parentmail.

### **Following up unexplained absence**

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact parents on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. This will usually be via a text message, email or via the SIMS app. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police, or social worker if the student has one allocated to them
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the student was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer

### **Reporting to parents**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels including the number of authorised and unauthorised absences

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **Approval for term-time leave of absence**

The Headteacher may allow students to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024 \(section 11\)](#). A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, and this includes the length of the authorised absence.

A leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and it is therefore unlikely that a leave of absence would be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the website [here](#). The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student/parent belongs. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the relevant religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Parents travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision
- If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school

Other reasons the school may allow a student to be absent from the school site, which is not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the student is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the student not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed
- Attendance at a funeral

## Sanctions

Fortismere School will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

## Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or a person authorised by them), Local authority or the Police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution

- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the student's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same student, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

### Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the student attends school and will include:

- Details of the student's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not previously engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Fortismere School will promote attendance in the following ways:

- Ensure there is a named member of the School Leadership Team to lead on attendance
- Communicate the effects of absence on examination outcomes with parents and ensure parents are aware of the ways to communicate with the school
- Ensure that we have clear systems to monitor and report student attendance and that these are shared with parents/ carers
- Celebrate good or improved attendance via the pastoral systems
- Build close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle poor attendance
- Continue to provide Pastoral staff with appropriate training to monitor patterns and support improvement where required
- Create intervention and reintegration plans in partnership with parents and students
- Agree school attendance targets and monitor and report on these to the Governing Body
- Work with external agencies to support good attendance where there are barriers for students and families

## **6. Supporting students who are absent or returning to school**

We are committed to working closely with students and their families to promote regular attendance for all. We understand that some students may face challenges that require personalised support and interventions, whether from the school or external agencies. Whilst we recognise that barriers to attendance can be complex, we will continue to set and uphold high expectations for all of our students. Research shows that regular school attendance can facilitate positive peer relationships, which is a protective factor for mental health and wellbeing.

Any temporary adjustments made to accommodate individual needs will be regularly reviewed in collaboration with the student and their parents/carers.

Where a student has an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that are related to the student's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

## **7. Monitoring Attendance**

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level. The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school and year group level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing body.

### **Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Share data regularly with key pastoral staff and senior leaders with responsibility for attendance to enable discussions with students and parents/carers
- Identify students whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Use data to monitor and evaluate interventions and adjustments put in place for students

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more sessions of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more sessions of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance. The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant



- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these students. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5, above)
- Sign-post parents to wider support services that may support them in removing barriers to attendance

## **8. Policy monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or the DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

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

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE school attendance guidance available [here](#)

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not

		required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>

<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

## Appendix 2: Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)

The statutory guidance is based on the following legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools