

Attendance Policy and Procedures
Part 1 - for Parents/Carers

Fortismere School September 2015

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Attendance policy and procedures

Introduction

These attendance procedures set out the requirements for Fortismere School. They reflect statutory requirements and the most recent guidance from the DFE.

The key principles which underpin our procedures for managing attendance are:

- Regular and punctual attendance at the school is key to the academic and social development that will improve the life chances of children and young people.
- Students/ young people who attend school regularly and punctually are less likely to be at risk, both in terms of engaging anti-social behaviour and in terms of their own health, safety and welfare.
- Parent and carers have a duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually in order to get the most benefit from their schooling.
- We are committed to supporting children and young people, schools and families to achieve and maintain good attendance at school.

Why attendance is important

For a small minority, school is the only place of physical as well as emotional safety and may be the most secure aspect of their lives.

Students who do not attend school regularly are at risk from a whole range of factors that may lead to poor outcomes, including low attainment and social exclusion. The link between irregular/non-school attendance and poor academic achievement and limited life outcomes has been well established. Research shows that:

- Only 7% of persistent absentees achieve 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C grades (DCSF statistics)
- 33% of persistent absentees achieve no qualifications at all (DCSF Statistics)
- Persistent absentees are more than twice as likely to criminally offend (youth justice board statistics)
- Pupils aged 15 who have played truant are more likely to drink alcohol regularly, more than twice as likely to have taken drugs and three times as likely to smoke regularly. They are also at a higher risk of teenage pregnancy (Department of health statistics)

It is essential that all students/ young people registered for education at school, attend regularly and on time and that they access all of the opportunities that education offers.

The Legal Framework

Attendance at school is based on a range of statutory requirements. These place duties on the Local Authority, parents/carers and schools. Other partners, such as police and the Youth Offending Service have particular responsibilities for contributing to initiatives to address non-attendance at school or other provision

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' to also include:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who although not a natural parent, has parental 'responsibility' for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, 'has care' of a child or young person

Section 3 of the children Act 1989 defines parental responsibility (PR) as all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law has in relation to a child and his/her property

In the case of children who are 'looked after' by the local authority, (LAC) parental responsibility is with the allocated Social Worker, as the LA is the corporate parent

Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring those children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education, either by compulsory attendance at school or otherwise (section 7 of the Education Act 1996)

Fortismere has a duty to take action against those parents/carers, either by;

- Issuing a fixed penalty notice
- Prosecution in the Magistrates Court
- Application for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) under the children Act 1989 in the Family Proceedings Court

Raising the participation age

All young people are required to remain in some form of education or training until their 18th birthday. See careers guidance and [6th form entry requirements](#).

Full time education

The Department for Education provides guidance on the minimum time that pupils should be taught each week as follows. This does not include breaks, registration or collective worship.

- Key Stage 1 21 hours
- Key Stage 2 23 hours 30 minutes
- Key Stage 3 24 hours
- Key stage 5 25 hours

Education other than at school

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their children receive a suitable education. They do not have to do this through registering them for attendance at school. However, they do have to demonstrate that the education provided is suitable. The local authority policy for education other than at school (elective home education) sets out the procedure for managing this in Haringey.

Our expectation is:

1. Statement - Headteacher

Outstanding teaching and learning are not possible without outstanding attendance and at Fortismere, we both believe this and know it from our daily experience. While the national average percentage may be acceptable to some, it is not to us and so my expectation is that students will attend for a **minimum of 97%** of the time. Requests for absence during school term will only be considered under exceptional circumstances and the threshold for considering all but a few particular situations is set at 97%. As parents and carers, we welcome your support and we know that by working together to insist on high attendance rates for your sons and daughters, together we will achieve the best outcomes for all.

2. Home School Agreement - See Appendix 1

| Concern | | Head of College Referral | Provision |
|---|--|--|--|
| Concern Categories 1. Progress 2. Social/Emotional 3. Attendance 4. Self-Referral | Concerns raised by: > Tutor > Teacher > Parent > Student > HoFor HoD > Data | ** Referral Process (Referral Form counter-signed by HoC) • College Meetings • Student Progress Meetings • Inclusion Panel • Personalised Intervention Meeting | Learning Mentor • Academic Coach ^ Counselling (School Counsellor or Place2Be) Home School Liaison Alternative Pathways Interventions (PIJ AfA, RR, Departmental Interventions Ho< Reports, Tutor Reports, Positive Plus, Behaviour Interventions) |

This is signed by parent/carer, child and tutor on behalf of the school when a student starts Fortismere. There is a separate agreement when a student enters the 6th form. Please see **appendix 2**.

Please see **appendix 3** for home and school supporting students learning.

School procedures to monitor and support attendance for students in years 7 to 11

As stated above, we will work together to ensure young people are in school. Below are the procedures that you need to follow if your child is absent:

1. Absence due to illness

In the case of a child being absent from school due to illness parents / carers should leave a message on the school's absence line; 020 8365 4429 or email attendance@fortismere.org.uk (please copy in form tutor) on each morning of the absence. If a message is not received it will be assumed that the child has returned to school.

If a child is absent for more than three days, the school might request medical evidence, for example a doctor's certificate.

For absences other than those due to illness, please see section 3, Leave of Absence, below.

2. Lateness:

- All students arriving later than 8.35am must enter the school via south wing. Their names will be recorded and a C3 is issued. Students are exempt from this punishment if parents have provided an explanation for their child's late arrival.
- Students with 2 or more lates in a 3 week period will be expected to attend an Extended Study session on a Saturday morning. Failure to attend this session will result in both the parents and the student meeting with the Head teacher and a governor to discuss their lateness.

3. Leave of Absence

- Absences due to illness will normally be authorised once you tell us. Please note that in some cases absences of more than three days might need the support of medical evidence, for example a doctor's certificate.
- Absence due to the funeral of a close family member, medical appointments and music exams (up to half a day) will be authorised, provided advance notice is provided in writing to the school.
- Absences for any other reason (for example family trips) will only be authorised at the discretion of the Head teacher. To seek this authorisation parents / carers should submit a [leave of absence form](#) (also known as the Green form) at least a week before the planned absence. The form is also available from the school office.

- Please note that Leave of Absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and only for students with an excellent attendance record (i.e. at or above the school's attendance target of 97%).
- If an application is declined and a student is then absent due to illness during the period for which the leave of absence was requested, the absence will only be authorised if supported by medical evidence, for example a doctor's certificate.

4. Trips Procedures

- All trips have to go through a thorough vetting process to ensure the safety procedure is put in place for all students. Parents are asked for medical information and their consent. A student factsheet list is procedure, containing all emergency information. On the day of the trip a register is taken, given to the office and students are recorded present with a V code.
- If your child is unable to go on the trip, please follow procedures as described in number 1. If a child is unwell on a trip you may be called to collect or a member of staff will bring the student back to school.

5. Exclusions and return to school

If a student receives exclusion the following procedures will take place:

- A phone call to inform parents of the nature and length of the exclusion
- A hand delivered letter outlining the exclusion details - normally given to the student who has been excluded, and a copy is posted to the home address.
- A copy of the letter is sent to Haringey, another copy is kept with the school on the student's records until they leave Fortismere.

6. Examinations

- There is **no** study leave from school in year 10 to revise for GCSEs
- If a student has an exam at another centre they will be allowed travel time.
- Please refer to the [Department for Education guidance on attendance](#) Following these guidelines if the school believes that the student has taken time off without the school's permission they will be asked to bring in medical evidence of their illness - a telephone message or note from a parent will not suffice during the exam period.
- During the Spring term the school will communicate the leaving date for years 11, 12 and 13 as soon as possible and the expectation is that students will continue to attend school up until this date. The school will provide revision sessions and alternative timetables for students who are attending school but may have taken their GCSE /A level already: these will be published on the school website. Absences for this period will be marked as unauthorised and texts home will indicate that the student has truanted and will therefore need to follow BFL guidelines of a C3 detention: failure to do so will result in a C4.
- Attendance records including unauthorised absences will be shared with schools/colleges in post-16 applications.

How we will support attendance in school: 7.

Text message procedures:

- Parents/carers who have failed to inform the school of their child's absence will receive a text message at 10.45am that day. The parents/carers then have the remainder of the school day to contact the attendance line. If no contact has been made by 3.30pm, a letter is sent home requesting immediate explanation.
- If there has been no response to the letter from the parent/carer, a Home School Liaison Officer will then contact parents/carers and if necessary arrange a meeting to discuss the unauthorised absence.

8. Role of the Deputy Head of College (DHoC):

- DHoCs interview students whose attendance is between 91 % and 96%. They discuss strategies for improving attendance. If attendance does not improve, the DHoC will contact the parents/carers to highlight the concern, provide support and agree solutions for ensuring the student attends school in accordance with the school agreement.
- Students are referred to the Home school liaison officer if parents/carers are not co-operative with the DHoCs or if a student's attendance is below 90%.

9 . Role of the Home School Liaison Officer:

Working with students with attendance concerns of 90% or below and liaising with parent/carers to raise these concerns, either in writing, by telephone, or by arranging formal meetings to discuss and plan interventions to support both the student and their families in overcoming the barriers which are preventing non-attendance.

Liaising with senior and middle leaders to discuss and review students' progress. Attending Team Around the Child/family meetings' and working in partnership with various agencies, which are supporting the students who are experiencing difficulty with poor attendance etc.

As a trained facilitator the Home School Liaison Officer can provide parenting workshops (Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities) to equip parents/carers with positive parenting strategies and skills. This is with a view to empowering the parents/carers to take control and make positive changes in theirs and their children's lives.

Daily role consists of looking at the am and pm registers to monitor the attendance of all students at Fortismere. Working closely with the DHoCs who support students whose attendance is between 91-96%

Weekly monitoring of the students whose attendance is a concern. Result in:

Sending out a fast track 1 attendance letter to the parent/carer, which would state that we will be monitoring their child's attendance for 4 weeks or contacting the parent/ carer by telephone to discuss concerns further to see if there was a history illnesses and request medical evidence, we will ensure that, we as a school are offering all the support we can, to

enable the student to still access their learning. Where the attendance for the student improves, monitoring will continue until the attendance figures go beyond 91%.

If no improvement is made, a fast track² letter will be sent, inviting the parents/carers in to school for an attendance panel meeting. During the meeting an agreement will be drawn up with the parent/carer and student, which would have targets to support the student in improving his/her attendance. See student panel meetings below.

The Home School Liaison Officer liaises with the Local Authority and receive advice and support with some of the cases.

10. **Student** panel meeting

From September 2015 regular fortnightly panel meetings will take place for students whose behaviour /attendance record is showing cause for concern and their parents/ carers will be required to attend. The panel will consist of the Headteacher, a Fortismere Governor and an Assistant Head. As a result of the meetings, action plans will be set up for the students to improve their behaviour, which will be supported by the school through the BFL system, including:

- Saturday workshops,
- monitoring,
- school reports,
- counselling
- or a more strategic intervention through a designated member of staff, an example
- might be the attendance officer or mentor.

The interventions recorded at this meeting will be reviewed fortnightly at the start of the next behaviour panel meeting.

11. **Line Faculty**

Support with attendance

There are a variety of reasons why students do not attend school, or attend school with difficulty, therefore, it is important to ascertain and understand the form of non-attendance. Where there is persistent non-attendance, it is vital that the school, family and child work together to support this.

Early Identification and Support

Prevention and early identification are vital therefore, staff within the Line Faculty work closely with key members of staff within school to support this process and having identified concerns regarding a student's attendance, offer timely support and intervention within the school setting.

Return to School Plan

An initial assessment of the student's needs is carried out through meeting them so they are given an opportunity to express their views and ideas about the difficulties that they are experiencing and what they feel would be helpful. This is usually undertaken within school or the home setting by a Learning Mentor and, where appropriate, the Home School Liaison Officer. The parents'/carers' views will also be taken into account. Once this has taken place a meeting is held where a return to school plan is drawn up with the parents/carers, school staff and any other agencies involved. The meeting is solution-based and the student is encouraged to attend if they feel able to.

The following possibilities may be considered:

1. A return to school on a full timetable with support from a key member of staff;
2. Implementation of a part time timetable with a gradual return;
3. Consultation with CAMHS and other agencies which may, if necessary, lead to a referral to Home Tuition Service as part of a reintegration plan.

A part time timetable is not considered a long-term solution but rather as part of a reintegration package. It is important that, once agreed, there is a shared expectation that the plan will work and that there is a high level of communication and a supportive partnership between school and parents/carers. It is anticipated that over time, and with gradual and supported access to school, the student will increase their attendance to school.

Learning Mentor Team

The Learning Mentor team help to support students with non-attendance. They often act as a key person from school that the student can build a positive relationship with as well as a point of contact for parents/carers. With the Head of Line, they are involved in coordinating the return to school plan and the response of support services. They may support a student's reintegration in to school in the following ways;

- Acting as a key person for the student to 'check in' with throughout the day
- Liaising with teaching staff about the student's difficulties and the agreed reintegration plan
- Providing a safe space in school that the student can go to if needed
- Identifying effective strategies that can be shared with all staff
- Attending and helping to coordinate Team around the Family meetings where any services supporting the student are brought together with school and parents/carers to regularly plan and review progress over time
- Signposting services, as appropriate, which may provide support to the family
- Identifying school based interventions to support the student which may include buddying, mentoring or a defined group

- Supporting the student with managing anxious or difficult feelings through the support provided through the Nurture room

External Support Services

Where non-attendance has become entrenched or levels of anxiety are interfering with everyday life, it may be appropriate to seek further support for the student and their family. These services may include;

- Educational Psychology Service (EPS);
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Where a student is unable, in the short term, to access school over a prolonged period of time, they may be referred to the Home Tuition Service. The aim of this service is to reintegrate the student back into mainstream education at the earliest opportunity; this is carried out in collaboration with the school.

Educational Psychology Service

In some cases, the school will consult with the allocated Educational Psychologist to help support the student, school and family. This may encompass a range of activities, for example;

- Psychological approaches to help reduce any anxiety and to help the student feel more confident about attending school
- Advice to home and school on managing and working with the student
- Advice on the design and implementation of a reintegration programme into school
- Involvement in team around the family meetings

Home Tuition Service

In rare cases where a student cannot access school despite support and intervention, the school can refer to the Home Tuition Service. Reasons for request for support may include;

- medical;
- emotional or mental health related difficulties;
- pregnancy.

A request for support needs to be confirmed by a Senior Health practitioner, such as a Consultant Paediatrician or CAMHS. The Home Tuition Service may provide a tutor for a time limited period. This would take place during school hours and in term time. There is an expectation that individual students would be supported to follow a programme of reintegration with their overall aim to return to school as soon as appropriate. The student would remain on roll at school during this period.

Fortismere Sixth Form Attendance Policy

We know that poor attendance and punctuality affects not only individual student's grades but also the learning of the whole class: content missed may have to be repeated; group activities and presentations are disrupted. It also shows a lack of respect for, and a poor attitude towards the teachers and the subjects being missed.

98-100% Expected levels of attendance
95%-97% Satisfactory
Below 95% but above 90% a cause for concern
Below 90% serious concern

Absences

While we acknowledge that occasional absence might be necessary, we expect that this will be verified by a parent/carer and that they will contact Mrs Patel our Sixth Form Administrator by phone or email. Her contact details are:

0208 365 4453 or sixthform@fortismere.org.uk

Monitoring of attendance

All Fortismere Sixth Form students will be closely monitored by the school to ensure attendance does not become a hurdle to their academic success. Parents/ carers will receive a daily email to let them know if the student has missed lessons, or if they have been marked late to lessons. If students are becoming a cause for concern due to attendance the following will happen:

Stage 1

A letter will be sent home and tutors will meet with the student

Stage 2

If no improvement is seen the student will meet with their Learning Manager and may be placed on an attendance report. They will also be required to attend the Private Study room in their non-contact periods. This will be monitored by our Academic Coach who is based in this room. If we see an improvement in attendance then the students will be allowed to stop attending private study in their non-contact periods.

Stage 3

Students who have still not improved after the previous two stages will attend an attendance panel with their parents/carers. If attendance has consistently been below 95% the student may be required to stay on an attendance report and report to the Director of Sixth Form daily. Where it has been consistently below 90% **students will be asked to reconsider their educational options and to discuss alternative pathways**. Students will have a careers meeting and be given advice and guidance about appropriate alternative pathways at Fortismere and at other establishments.

POLICY REVIEW DATE: June 2016

Appendix 1 Home/school

agreement

The parent/carer

I/We will do our best to;

- See that my/our child attends school regularly, on time and properly equipped
- Ensure that my/our child achieves 97% attendance throughout the school year
- Make the school aware of any concerns or problems that might affect my/our child's learning
- Support the school's aims and policies
- Ensure that my/our child abides by the school's **Dress Code**
- Regularly check and encourage my/our child in homework and other opportunities for learning
- Register with ParentMail in order to receive communications from the school
- Attend parents' evenings and discussions about my/our child's progress.
- Become actively involved in supporting my/our child's life at school

Signature(s)

The school

We will;

- Be open and welcoming at all times and offer opportunities for you to become involved in the life of the school
- Care for your child's safety and well-being
- Respond to your concerns promptly
- Keep you informed about general school matters and about your child's progress
- Support your child to achieve high standards of work and behaviour through building good relationships and developing a sense of responsibility
- Work to develop your child's potential
- Provide a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum
- Set and mark appropriate homework and provide facilities in school to support learning

Signature (Tutor)

Tutor Group:

The Student

I will;

- Attend school regularly and on time and bring the equipment I need every day
- Follow the school rules as made clear by the BFL (Behaviour for Learning) Policy and any other appropriate school policies, particularly the Dress Code.
- Do my best to achieve my full potential
- Be polite, kind and helpful to others
- Involve myself in additional opportunities provided by the school

Name of Student:.....Signature

Appendix 2

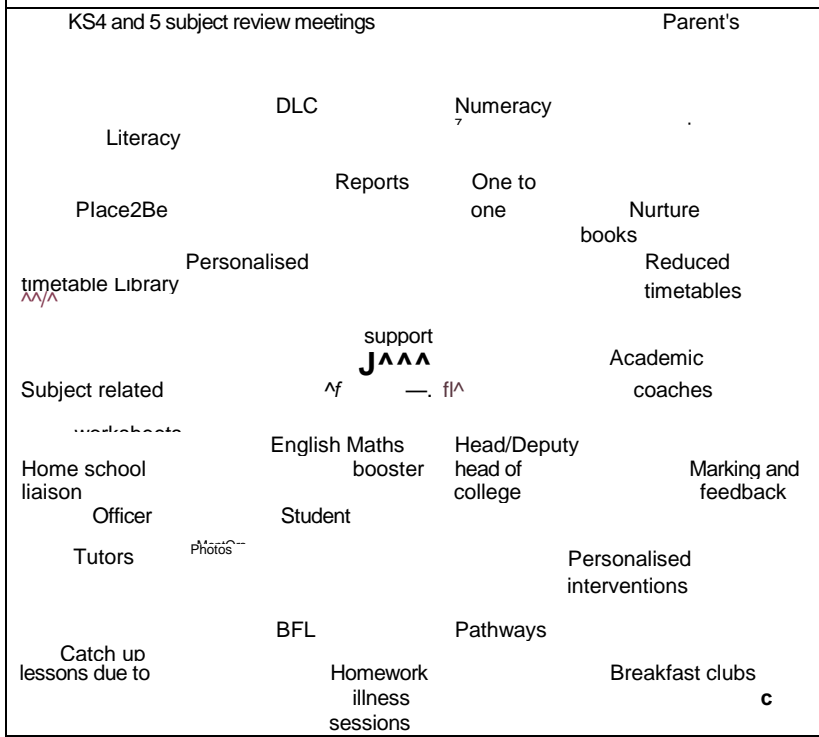
Fortismere Sixth Form and student learning agreement

This agreement needs to be signed and returned to your form tutor. You will not be able to finish enrolment unless you have returned it.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Fortismere Sixth Form will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that we uphold daily our aims and aspirations for our Sixth Form students • treat all of our students with respect and care for their safety and their well being • offer all of our students the opportunity to develop themselves individually but also as role models and leaders within our whole school • meet the needs of all of our students • keep students and parents/guardians informed of individual progress and general Sixth Form information • contact students and parents/guardians if there are concerns over attendance and punctuality and work with students and parents/guardians if there are concerns regarding welfare • challenge our students to meet their academic targets • allow students the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities <p>signed on behalf of Sixth Form:</p> | <p>1, as a Sixth Form Student will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attend school fit and ready to work. Socialising, late nights and employment will not interfere with my ability to work • make appropriate use of the library and Sixth Form study room • attend on time and dressed according to the school dress code • take responsibility for my learning, complete all work to the best of my ability and bring the necessary equipment and folders each day. 1 will also take care in the presentation of my work and notes • show respect and courtesy to all members of the school community and abide by all school policies • take full advantage of the opportunities offered to me to develop as a learner and as a leader • attend all assemblies, tutor periods and mentoring sessions as instructed by my tutor <p>I understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I must wear my ID lanyard at all times and will be sent home to collect it if forgotten. • smoking and anti-social behaviour on or near the school site is forbidden. If this is persistently violated then it may result in exclusion and potential permanent exclusion. • if my attendance falls below 95% I may be required to attend full time private study. • If my attendance falls below 90% I may have to attend an attendance panel. <p>Signed:</p> <p>Name: Date:</p> |
|---|--|

Appendix 3

Supporting students learning - School and home joined up



Regular data drops to monitor impact


 Information- website/one to one meeting
 Home School Agreement
 Deep learning conversations
 Parent's evenings
 Information evenings
 Tutors/College
 Team around the child and family
 meetings Attendance and Learning
 Safeguarding
 Work with outside agencies to support