

Sixth Form Academic Support and Progress 2023-24

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1. Aims

The majority of Fortismere Sixth Form students achieve very highly but a minority of students underachieve. This document outlines how the School supports and challenges these students, setting out the approaches taken to working with students according to the cause(s) of their underachievement. It explains the processes in place for managing underachievement at different points in the two years with particular focus on early intervention and helping students develop the independent learning skills which are crucial to success. Note: Course/subject are used interchangeably to mean a single A level or treble BTEC studied over two years.

2. Scope

Fortismere Sixth Form is committed to providing students with effective support. Outlined here is the framework of support that builds on best practice, meets student needs and ensures consistency. We aim to enable students to monitor their progress and performance more systematically.

Within Fortismere Sixth Form, the tutorial (pastoral) system is a key element of academic and pastoral support for our students. The tutor is a key role and every student has a tutor who provides a readily accessible, primary point of contact for academic guidance and pastoral support (signposting to student support services), to help tutees reflect on their academic progress and get the most out of their studies.

3. Universal support

The Sixth Form is a pivotal, challenging period of most students' lives. As such, support is in place to ensure that all students can enjoy and make progress during their Sixth Form experience at Fortismere. This takes the form of:

- a) **Tutor** - the student will see their tutor each day and the tutor should be the first point of contact for all questions from students and parents/carers;
- b) **Weekly Assemblies** - led by the Sixth Form Team and regularly featuring external speakers;
- c) **Independent Learning Coordinator** - based in T19, our study room, our Independent Learning Coordinator is there to support all students, particularly with areas such as good study habits, time management and creating a vision to motivate themselves;
- d) **Enrichment** - Year 12 enjoy enrichment activities during Wednesday Period 5 each week. This is a mandatory part of Fortismere Sixth Form.

4. Causes of underachievement

We have identified three main reasons for underachievement:

- 1) Students have a poor approach to attendance/punctuality and/or do not work hard enough - addressed via our "Supporting Sixth Form Achievement" programme outlined below;
- 2) Students struggle with the academic challenge of the course;
- 3) Students are hindered by health and well-being challenges.

Our approach is very different in these three different scenarios, and we tailor our support to individual circumstances in every case. This document addresses causes 1) and 2)

Where students are hindered by health and well-being challenges then available support will be provided in line with the school's Attendance & Punctuality and Positive Mental Health policies.

5. Supporting Sixth Form Achievement Programme

At the end of each half-term, data will be analysed to establish students who are not meeting our expectations in the following areas:

- Attendance to lessons - we encourage students to aim for 100% attendance and anything below 90% is not acceptable without clear authorised reasons
- Punctuality to lessons
- Consistent delivery of homework or other independent work
- Behaviour

Such students will then be included in the following support programmes for the subsequent half-term:

5.1 Tutor Support

Students who have been identified as struggling or underperforming for the first time will be included in our tutor support programme. This includes:

- Once a week attending a Tutor Time session (1.45-2.15) reserved for such students, where the tutor and student will set and regularly review improvement targets
- Staying behind at school one day a week (3.30-4.30) to complete an additional hour of supervised silent study time, to help support their academic progress

- Tutor will make contact with parent/carer to update around targets enabling support from home

At the end of the half-term, some students will no longer be required to attend, some will be extended for a (maximum) second half-term, and some will be escalated to Head of Year Support

5.2 Head of Year Support

If, following a half-term of Tutor Support, the student continues to struggle or underachieve, they will be moved into Head of Year Support. This includes:

- Staying behind at school two days a week (3.30-4.30) to complete an additional hour of supervised silent study time, to help support their academic progress
- A weekly target-setting and review meeting with their Head of Year
- Weekly tutor time session and support from our Independent Learning Coordinator around independent learning and time-management skills
- Head of Year will make contact with parent/carer to update around targets enabling support from home

At the end of the half-term, some students will no longer be required to attend, some will be extended, and where necessary students will be placed on report to the Director of Sixth Form

5.3 Report to Director of Sixth Form

If the student refuses to engage with Head of Year support, they will be placed on report to the Director of Sixth Form. This level of support is to address repeated breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy. Where failure to attend lessons, poor punctuality, failure to complete homework or poor behaviour are repeated over an extended period of time, and not improving with the support outlined above, this becomes an issue of behaviour.

The conditions of Director of Sixth Form Report are:

- Moving to a full-time timetable where all non-contact time is spent in supervised study
- Staying behind at school each day (3.30-4.30) to complete additional supervised silent study time, to help support their academic progress
- A fortnightly target-setting and review meeting with their Head of Year
- Weekly tutor time session and support from our Independent Learning Coordinator around independent learning and time-management skills
- Head of Year will make contact with parent/carer to update around targets enabling support from home
- In Year 13, where a student is likely to fail, we may say that if they do not pass the targets we will not enter them for one or more of their exams.

At this stage new targets will be set and students will be given time to demonstrate engagement and progress. The DoSF will explain to the student that the consequence of failing to meet these targets would be regarded as unacceptable behaviour as part of the school's behaviour policy and further consequences include the potential for suspension from school. From this point onwards the school's Behaviour Policy would dictate next steps.

Student involvement and parental contact:

We want parents/carers to be aware when a student is receiving support, so parents will be advised at every stage of the support process. At every stage, the teacher will have a

discussion with the student, and parents/carers will receive a phone call (or if not possible an email) outlining targets.

6. Support for students who struggle with the academic challenge of the course

Linear A Levels are extremely challenging and success at GCSE does not always mean students will make good progress at A Level. At regular intervals during the school year students will be assessed in each subject and data will be analysed to establish students who are not making expected academic progress. When students are working very hard and still struggling to understand the content and develop the necessary skills, the following support is offered:

6.1 Academic support - provided within subjects

- Access to additional resources and material
- Upper sixth mentoring
- One to one help from teachers
- Small group 'booster' sessions for struggling students

6.2 Additional support - coordinated by our Sixth Form Independent Learning Coordinator and the school LINC Department

- To students with identified Additional Learning Support (ALS) needs through the School's LINC Department or our Independent Learning Coordinator
- From our full-time Sixth Form Independent Learning Coordinator who provides support to students who need help with time management and study skills.
- Referral and signposting internally and externally for additional pastoral support if appropriate

Within the first half-term

Within the first half-term, a diagnostic assessment in each subject will assess students' suitability for their chosen courses. Where student performance in this early assessment causes a significant concern teachers will raise this. Where it is felt that the issue is likely to mean a student will achieve a U or E grade in the course, we will help the student to switch to a more suitable course and the parent will be notified.

For students studying A Levels, if concern is raised in two or more courses it may be more appropriate to move the student onto our BTEC course and we reserve the right to do this.

Ongoing

We assess students formally at three points in each year, with progress data being reported on to parents. Where students are failing to make expected progress in two or more of their subjects then students may be included in the Tutor Support and Head of Year Support programmes outlined above. Students will not be escalated to Director of Sixth Form report based on academic performance (see paragraph below)

Please note that where a student is doing their best and meeting our expectations there is no situation where they would be placed on report to the Director of Sixth Form; this step exists only to address repeated failure to meet school expectations in terms of behaviour and expected standards including attending lessons/punctuality/completing homework.

Repeated under-performance

Where students have multiple E/U grades they will automatically be included in the Supporting Sixth Form Achievement programme. If they have multiple E/U grades in successive assessments during Year 12 including their end-of-year exams, then we will review their choice of courses. This is to prevent students continuing in courses where they have little chance of a successful outcome, as the summer exams are an excellent measure of how much of the Year 12 content a student has understood - students who get E or U grades in these exams are in a very precarious position to start the harder Year 13 work as they do not have the knowledge and skills to build upon.

Failure to engage with Head of Year support would be treated as a behaviour issue which could lead to escalation to being on report to the Director of Sixth Form, as outlined above.

Changing course

In some cases students find it so hard to access the academic content of their chosen course that they cannot make progress, no matter how much hard work they put in and how much support they are given. In these circumstances and if it is during the first half term of the first year, we take steps to ensure these students change on to a subject in which they can succeed. No course changes will be approved after October half-term of Year 12.

If at the end of Year 12 it has become evident that the student cannot access the challenging content of the course, despite all their hard work and the support they have been given, we will consider:

- Starting the first year again with our BTEC course or different subjects (only for first year students with additional mitigating circumstances)

If during Year 13 it has become evident that the student cannot access the challenging content of the course, despite all their hard work and the support they have been given, we will consider:

- Dropping a subject and focusing on the other two subjects (Year 13 only and for students with additional mitigating circumstances)

Resitting Year 12 exams

If at the end of Year 12 it has been decided that it would be more appropriate for a student to restart Year 12 on different courses, including our BTEC Course, the student may choose to voluntarily resit their Year 12 exams on the INSET days at the start of Year 13. This would be agreed at the end of Year 12. If the student significantly improved their performance in this resit (eliminating any E/U grades), they would be allowed to continue on their original courses.

Year 13

Any student achieving multiple E/U grades in their Year 13 Progress point assessments will immediately move to "Head of Year" support. This would ensure they have the support to increase their level of work and support them in improving their independent learning skills. Failure to engage with Head of Year support would be treated as a behaviour issue which could lead to escalation to being on report to the Director of Sixth Form, as outlined above.

Year 13 Final exam entries

If, during Year 13, a student is continuing to not work hard enough and/or still has poor attendance despite all the intervention and support provided, we may decide not to enter them for an exam in one or more subjects. Students who wish to sit their exams may choose to pay to enter their exams as an external candidate