

Ferndown Upper School

**Sixth Form
Attendance Policy**

Revised: January 2023

Ferndown Upper Sixth Form Attendance Policy

Ferndown Upper School takes attendance in the Sixth Form very seriously and we acknowledge that good school attendance plays an essential part in academic development for post 16 students.

All post 16 courses are intensive and students cannot afford to miss valuable teaching and study time.

As well as timetabled lessons students also have non-contact periods on their timetables for independent study, social time and enrichment activities.

Sixth form students should strive to achieve consistently good attendance as poor attendance will affect academic attainment. Students should therefore aim for at least 95% attendance for the year. Good attendance also plays an important part when applying to higher education establishments or employment.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

Whole-School Policy for School Attendance

Ferndown Upper School aims to:

- Improve the overall percentage of students at school to above 95%
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and Governors
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance-related data
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Implement a system of rewards and sanctions
- Promote effective partnerships with external services and agencies
- Recognise the needs and support of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

Partnership

What the school expects of students

- Attend regularly, on time and ready to learn
- Attend registration, tutor time, lessons and enrichment
- To sign in if they arrive after registration time
- To tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school
- Make every effort to make dental/medical appointments outside of school hours or in free periods
- Communicate to the sixth form team any unavoidable absences giving as much notice as possible

What the school expects of parents/carers

- To fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly, on time and prepared for the day
- To contact school on the **first day** their child is absent for any reason and then on **all** subsequent days if the student is unable to contact school him/herself.
- To **avoid** taking holidays in term time
- To speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem which may prevent their child from attending school
- To provide evidence to support absence such as an appointment card/letter, a copy of a prescription slip with name and date visible or medication packaging with name and date visible.

What parents/carers and pupils can expect from school

- A Sixth Form education that is dependent upon regular attendance at school
- Promotion of good attendance and punctuality at school, and regular encouragement and rewards
- Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of absence
- Prompt action when a problem has been identified
- Regular communication with students and parents/carers

Absences

Acceptable reasons for being absent from school, set by the Department for Education:

- The student is too ill to leave the house
- The student has a hospital appointment
- The student has toothache and has an emergency appointment
- A day of religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs
- The student is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
- There is a close family bereavement
- Interviews for courses/employment that will begin after the end of their time in Sixth Form. Students should not miss lessons to attend interviews, shifts and inductions for part-time work
- University and Employer Open Days – students may attend no more than two of these events in an academic year
- Work experience – requests for term-time leave for essential work experience (e.g. medicine, law) will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. These requests should be submitted at least a month in advance
- Driving test

Unacceptable reasons for keeping a child away from school are:

- To look after the house
- To look after siblings
- Sleeping in
- One child is ill, so all are kept off school
- Minor ailments such as a tummy ache or headache
- Because it is the end of the week or term
- Driving lessons (should be taken in free periods)
- Adverse weather conditions
- Holidays

If a student is absent from school longer than a period of 5 days due to illness parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence to support the student's absence.

Leave of absence may not be given to enable a pupil to undertake employment during school hours unless it is to engage in work experience arranged through school.

Signing In and Out

It is a legal requirement that we know who is in the school building at all times.

Students must make sure that they sign in each time they are late to school then sign out each time they leave the building throughout the day.

In-school procedures

We are keen to identify attendance concerns at the earliest opportunity to give parents/carers, students and the school the ability to intervene early and prevent further decline. We will do this by following the procedures outlined below;

Unexplained absence process

If a student is absent from school and we have received no communication from a parent/carer a text message will be sent to the InTouch contact on the morning of students' absence requesting a reason.

A letter/email detailing any unexplained absences will be sent to the parent/carer if no communication has been received. A reply is requested stating the reason for the students' absence to enable attendance records to be updated; if no reply is received, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Cause for concern process

Cause for concern letters will be sent home to parents/carers when attendance is between 90 & 95%.

This early notification is intended to share our concerns with you and give you the opportunity to intervene/contact the school so that early support/intervention can be put in to place, if needed.

STAGE 1 – Pastoral Manager Intervention - Attendance below 90%

- Should attendance decline to 90% or below students will be invited to attend a meeting with the Pastoral Manager.
- This meeting is an opportunity to discuss in detail the issues/barriers that are impacting your child's attendance to school.
- A letter will be sent to parents/carers informing you that this meeting has taken place.
- An Attendance Agreement will be issued and action points put into place that are agreed by the Pastoral Manager and the student.
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The attendance plan will be monitored closely for 5 weeks.

STAGE 2 – Head of Sixth Form Intervention - Failure to meet the requirements set by the attendance agreement

- A letter will be sent to the parents/carers of the student informing them of the situation and inviting them to a meeting.
- The offending student will be asked to meet with the Head of Sixth Form with parents/carers.
- A written warning will be issued if appropriate.

STAGE 3 – Senior Leadership/Head Teacher Intervention - Continued failure to meet requirements of attendance agreement

- The student's place upon their courses will be in jeopardy if lesson attendance falls to below 80%. If this is the case for all of the student's lessons then this means the student's place in the 6th form will be in question.
- Appropriate disciplinary proceedings will be decided by the Head Teacher.
- The parents/carers of the student will be involved in the process.

Holidays

Government legislation does not permit parents/carers to take their child/ren out of school during term time as this can have a detrimental effect on their academic progress.

Holidays **will not be authorised** in school time. Parents/carers wishing to apply for exceptional circumstances need to make a request to the Head of Sixth Form at least 20 school days prior to the absence. Upon receipt of this, a decision will be made, (the Headteacher's decision is final), and parents/carers will be notified either in writing/or verbally of our decision, course of action and how the absence will be recorded on our system. If this request is not agreed the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and you may receive a Holiday Penalty Notice (fine) from the Local Authority.

If an unauthorised holiday is taken, the student will be required to complete a period of extended days at school equal to the length of the holiday. Extended day takes place from 2:40-3:40 (3:40-4:40 if a period 6 lesson is timetabled). For example, if a student took a holiday for 5 days, they would need to attend extended day for 5 days upon their return.