

Aim

To ensure whole school attendance is at least 95% and Persistent Absenteeism (students with attendance below 90%) is less than 6% of the school population as a whole.

Rationale

There is a clear link between attendance and achievement. Charlie Taylor's report in July 2012 for the DfE on improving attendance shows that nationally 73% of students who had attendance over 95% achieved 5 A*-Cs at GCSE, including English and Maths. Of pupils who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% achieve the same results. Other data suggests that only 40% of children whose attendance is between 91-95% achieve 5 A*-Cs including English and Maths and this drops to just about 22% for those whose attendance is between 85-90%. Achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs can increase wages by 42%. Attendance at Fitzharrys has been pretty stable for the last 6 years but is now well below the national average after attendance has improved nationally over the last 2 years. We are currently in the 5th quintile nationally for attendance for secondary schools. At Fitzharrys in 2012, only 27% of students with attendance below 93% achieved on average 8 Cs or above at GCSE. 66% of students with attendance over 96% achieved at least 8 Cs at GCSE.

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children attend the school where they are on roll. Some pupils and their parents/carers may need to be supported at times in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities. A number of staff and outside agencies have responsibility for ensuring this happens. These are outlined below along with the timeframe for action for students who are regularly absent.

Implementation

Attendance targets and interventions

Every student will have an attendance target of at least 95%. The school will promote the importance of this figure to students, parents and staff and reinforce the message throughout the year. If attendance drops below 95%, parents will be contacted to warn them about their child's poor attendance. These letters would be sent out after term 1 and once a term after this. Letter A, will remind parents of the importance of good attendance and the impact of poor attendance on achievement. If a student's attendance is in the low 90s at the end of the next term, a member of staff will be allocated to monitor that student's attendance until it rises above 95% again.

If attendance drops below 90% by the end of term 1, Letter B will be sent explaining that attendance is a serious concern and the student has until the end of term 2 to raise their attendance over 90%. If attendance does not improve, Letter C will be sent out inviting the parent in for a meeting where a parenting contract will be drawn up to support the child

and the family in improving their attendance. This will start in term 3 to give us appropriate timelines to use as an evidence base.

An attendance target for the next 20 sessions (4 weeks) will be set and the attendance of the student will be reviewed after the 4 week period. If attendance has not improved, a multi-agency meeting involving school, parent and student, the Hub and the county Attendance Officer (CEO) will be called to decide on the next steps. Letter D will invite parents to this meeting. If attendance drops below 90% later in the school year, Letter B will be sent and attendance monitored over the next 4 weeks. The same procedures would then be followed if attendance does not improve.

If a student had poor attendance in the previous year, the timelines on interventions will be moved forward to the end of term 1. Parents and students will be informed at the beginning of term 1 that their attendance over the first term is being closely monitored.

Monitoring

Every student with poor attendance in the previous year will be allocated a member of staff whose responsibility it will be to promote good attendance for that student. Students with the poorest attendance, who are likely to need parenting contracts, will be monitored by Student Well-being managers (SWMs) and Heads of Year (HOYs). Usually up to ten students allocated to SWMs and five to HOYs. Every other member of staff, teaching and non-teaching, would be allocated one student to monitor. For teachers this would be a student in their tutor group. Monitoring would involve calling the parent of the student on the day of absence to determine whether there are any problems that school can deal with to ensure a swift return, and to remind them of the impact of absence on achievement. The member of staff will make a brief record of the call on the information section of Bromcom. The Attendance/Admissions Coordinator will e-mail round the absence list each day for people to check. The lists will be reviewed every term in order to make sure that the correct students are targeted.

School Registration Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration must have their absence recorded as authorised or unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (supervised attendance outside of school). If there is no known reason for absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded as unauthorised in the first instance. Only the Headteacher, or a member of staff acting on their behalf, can authorise absence.

Lateness

Students must arrive between 8:30 and 8:37 am and be sitting in their form rooms for Fitzfocus, starting at 8:40am. Morning registers will open at 8.40am and remain open for 30 minutes. Any student arriving after the registers have closed will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is a suitable explanation i.e school transport was delayed.

Students arriving after the start of school but before the end of the AM registration period will be treated, for statistical purposes, as present but will be coded as late (L).

Absence

Parents/Carers should inform the school if their child is going to be absent, or late in to school, on or before the first day by calling the **absence line on 01235 538243 before 10am**. They should provide a reason for the absence and if absence continues beyond two days, call the absence line again to inform us of this.

If a student is absent from morning registration for no known reason then their parent/Guardian will be contacted automatically by Parent Call text (unless they have opted out of the system). Absences that remain unexplained will be followed up by letter 1 week later.

Authorised and Unauthorised absence

Illness

The only reason why a student should be off school is because they are really very unwell and are not able to get through the day. We would encourage parents to send their child in to school, even if they are feeling a little bit unwell ; for example with a sore throat, cough or headache, because of the obvious educational benefits. The exceptions to this are if you have been advised by a doctor to keep your child off school or if they are infectious.

We will send a child home who says they feel unwell if we are concerned for their well-being. However, under no circumstances should a child phone home during the school day to ask a parent to collect them because they feel unwell. Any contact between student and parent during the school day must go through the school's main switchboard or student services.

If absence is due to illness over 10 days, or in a regular pattern, we will seek written permission from parents to contact their GP for confirmation that the student is too ill to attend. If absence due to illness continues, we will stop authorising the absence after one month unless we receive a consultant's letter. This letter will allow us to access support

from the hospital school. If a student's attendance is below 85% we will use our understanding of the student's condition and prior attendance records, alongside the available evidence from parents and doctors, to decide whether we will continue to authorise absence for illness. If we have no firm medical evidence that there is a reason why the student is absent from school, the absence will no longer be authorised.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Where possible, parents should try and arrange these for out of school hours. If this is not possible, then they should try to arrange them for first thing in the morning, or after 2.15pm. Evidence of the appointment must be shown when the student signs in or out. We will only ever authorise a half day of absence for medical or dental appointments.

Holidays during term time

As of September 2013, the Department for Education has changed the regulations about term time holidays. Parents no longer have the opportunity to request up to two weeks holiday during term time. Requests for holidays during term time will no longer be authorised. If a child is absent, for a holiday, a penalty notice warning will be issued. If another holiday is taken during the same year, a penalty notice will be issued by the County Attendance Officer (CAO).

The head can receive requests for exceptional reasons for absences of one or two days. These will only be considered if the child's attendance is over 95%. Parents must complete an 'Exceptional leave of absence request' form, in advance, in order to apply to have this absence authorised.

Other reasons for absence

The following are NOT acceptable reasons to be off school:

- Not sleeping well the night before
- The birthday of a child or a family member
- Being tired after travelling back from a weekend away
- Going to a concert or sporting event
- Moving house or having to look after pets
- Helping out at events or parties
- Christmas shopping

The only other, authorised, reasons for absence are approved sporting or educational activities such as trips, work experience and sporting events run, or approved, by the school.

Late arrival of students, signing in and late detentions

Students should be here at 8.37am to be sat in their form rooms for Fitz Focus starting at 8.40am. Fitz Focus is a timetabled lesson which must be attended. *Punctuality is an important life skill.*

1. If students arrive between 8.37am and 8.50am, a senior member of teaching staff will give out a red slip explaining that they have a lunchtime detention for being late. They MAY be excused if they have a note and a suitable reason for their lateness.
2. If students arrive after 8.50am, they must sign in with Mrs Bradley. A slip will be issued that must be shown to their teacher explaining that they have either signed in with a legitimate reason (yellow) or are late for no good reason (red) and have a lunchtime detention.
3. If you arrive at a lesson without a slip from Mrs Bradley, your teacher will send you back to sign in and get one.
4. If you are late because you have had an appointment, you must bring a note from home explaining this. If you do not have a note, you will have a lunchtime detention.
5. Saying you got up late or had to go the shop is not an excuse. You have to be here on time and have to organise yourself accordingly.
6. If you were ill in the morning and come in late, you must have a note from a parent.
7. If you are on a bus that is late through no fault of your own you will be excused the late detention. This will not apply if you simply miss the bus.

County Attendance Officer interventions

If a student has 20 sessions (equivalent to 10 days) of unauthorised absence in a period of no more than 10 weeks, we may ask the County Attendance Officer (CAO) to issue a penalty notice warning. There must be sustained and significant improvement in attendance after the warning has been issued in order for the penalty notice (£60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days, and possible prosecution if unpaid) not to be issued. Further warnings will be issued if attendance drops again during the term/year.

A Penalty notice can also be issued for persistent lateness to school (after the register has closed) of 20 sessions (equivalent to 10 days) in a period of no more than 10 weeks OR for a leave of absence, that has not been authorised due to exceptional circumstances during term time, of at least 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) in a period of no more than 5 weeks.

Individual's responsibilities

We will use a range of strategies with students in school to promote the importance of attendance, the link with achievement, and the 95% target for all. There will be a fortnightly focus in Fitz Focus showing tutor group attendance with those above or below 95%. Students will plot their own attendance over the year and keep a record in their planner. Assemblies will also promote attendance regularly. There will be inter form competitions with house points and prizes for forms. There will be a prize draw for good attendance every term and only students with attendance at 95% or above will be eligible to win.

All students will :

- Arrive between 8.30 and 8.37am, appropriately prepared for the day and go straight to Fitz Focus.
- Go straight to Fitz Focus or assembly at 2pm (straight to period 5 on Wednesday).
- Attend school regularly and for the whole school day until 3.15pm (3pm on Wednesdays).
- Inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that affects their attendance at school.

All our students' parents/carers will:

- Ensure their children attend school every day unless they are too ill to attend or there is an acceptable reason for absence.
- Ensure their children arrive on time, prepared and equipped for the day.
- Inform the school's **Absence line 01235 538243 by 10am** on the day, if their child is going to be absent.
- Communicate with school about their children's progress and attend meetings such as Parents' Evenings.

The school will:

- Provide pupils with appropriate education.
- Provide parents with an 'Attendance and achievement policy: information for parents leaflet' each year.
- Respond to concerns raised by both pupils and parents/carers in a prompt, fair and proper manner.
- Follow the procedures of school and Education Social Work Service in dealing with attendance issues.
- Share expectations over attendance with parents and students.
- Use parent call to contact the parent if no reason is given for absence during the morning.

The Pastoral Director has responsibility for the following:

- Overall responsibility for policy.
- Production of information regarding the attendance policy for parents.
- Informing parents and staff of changes to attendance procedures.
- Reviewing attendance monitoring procedures meetings with the Attendance Coordinator.
- Monitoring/recording students who are late between 8.40-8.50am.
- Implementing plans for improved punctuality.

Heads of Year and Student Well Being Managers have responsibility for the following:

- Monitoring patterns of absence and implementing the attendance policy sanctions.
- Calling Parent Contract and Interagency meetings using the Case Process Flow Chart.
- Initiating referrals to the County Attendance Team (CAT).
- Liaising with the school nurse when students have a large number of medical absences.
- Monitoring the number of times a student is late.
- Supporting tutors in dealing with students who are persistently late.
- Termly meetings with Student Services Manager to initiate referrals.

Tutors have responsibility for the following:

- Completing registers during afternoon Fitz Focus.
- Encouraging students to bring in notes before planned absences and after other absences.
- Passing absence notes to the registrar when they are handed in.
- Promote good attendance through inter form competitions.
- Informing HOY of concerns over attendance or lack of parental contact over absence.
- Using sanctions to deal with students who are late for Fitz Focus.
- Informing HOYs of students who are persistently late for Fitz Focus.

The Attendance/Admissions Coordinator has responsibility for the following:

- Checking the absence line.
- Managing Parent Call.
- Meeting with the Pastoral Director fortnightly to analyse attendance figures.
- Producing fortnightly attendance printouts for HOYs of all students' attendance.
- Produce fortnightly attendance e-mail for each form group to be used in Fitz Focus.
- Liaising with HOYs over attendance issues every term.

- Sending out attendance warning letters when attendance drops below 95% and 90% in line with the Attendance and Achievement policy
- Calling to request GP note/appointment card/pharmacist note if medical absence lasts for more than 3 days.
- Maintaining a list of students who arrive late on the spreadsheet in the S drive.
- Signing in students who are late after 8.50am.
- Signing in and out students during the school day.

Heads of Departments have the responsibility for the following:

- Ensuring that class teachers take a register at the start of every lesson.

Class teachers have the responsibility for the following:

- Taking a register at the start of every lesson.
- Resolving truancy from single lessons.

Governors have the responsibility for the following:

- Monitoring attendance data.
- Assessing the impact of the attendance policy.

Combating Absenteeism in our School

This letter has been sent to parents and appears in the Parent Handbook:

Our school has installed an automatic communication system that will contact you directly if your child is marked late or absent at registration. This will ensure that the reason for the absence is known to us as soon as possible and to alert you if your child is not in school when they should be. Post-registration absences can also be detected and reported to you.

You will have already supplied contact telephone numbers when your child started at the school but please update these and where applicable include mobile and work numbers. If your home, mobile or works telephone number has changed recently please provide your new numbers including the area code. You may also supply an e-mail address for us to use to contact you. Please note, these numbers should be the contact numbers for parents, step-parents, or foster parents only.

*Your child will be automatically included on the system. However, should you prefer not to be notified that your child is absent from school, please call me on the above number to discuss this further. To allow you to familiarize yourself with this system, we have set up a **special local rate telephone number 0845 225 0201** which you may wish to call.*

By introducing this service, our school is able to reassure you that we are meeting Government recommendations in contacting you on the first day of your child's absence. It

will also provide an early warning system should your child go missing from school. As always your child's safety is our main concern.

Truancy Sweeps

In conjunction with the Police and the County attendance Team (CAT) we may carry out random blanket truancy sweeps. On any day, the homes of pupils absent without a reason provided may be visited and/or parents/carers contacted to be informed of the pupil's absence.

Thames Valley Police and the CAT may carry out area truancy sweeps where any pupil of school age found on the streets or in a public place is approached, asked why they are not in school and returned to school where appropriate. Parents/carers are contacted if they are not with the pupil at the time.

Following both types of sweeps, letters are sent to parents, pupils' attendance is monitored and if unauthorised absence is repeated, consideration is given to issuing Penalty Notices or in very serious cases, court action. Where parents acknowledge problems, they will be offered support by means of engaging in a contract with the school and, if necessary, the CAT. Thames Valley Police can be contacted on 01865 841148 and the County Attendance Team can be contacted on 01865 323513.

Action the school will aim to take if a student's attendance drops below 90% without good reason:

Parents will be contacted with regards to concerns. If no improvement is seen over the next term parents will be invited in and a parenting contract will be drawn up. The contract can be drawn up in the absence of the parent/s should they refuse to attend. A target will be set. If there is still no improvement over the next 20days then the school will call a multi-agency planning meeting involving the Hub and the County Attendance Officer (CAO). If a student has had previous poor attendance, parents may be invited in as soon as attendance falls below 90%.

The school has informed parents about its decision to work with the County Attendance Team (CAT) in tackling truancy and that they may deliver penalty notices, or pursue the prosecution of parents, whose children continue to miss school after all other interventions have failed. These will be issued for three reasons:

- Persistent truancy
- Persistent lateness
- Unauthorised holidays taken during term

The following notice has been placed in the parent handbook, and in the school newsletter, to inform parents/carers of our work with the CAT, and of the potential consequences of non-attendance of their children at school.

School Attendance

Schools in partnership with the Local Education Authority are imposing penalty notices for parents/carers of children who truant, take unauthorised holidays or are persistently late.

Different parts of the county are reporting dramatic improvements in attendance as a result of these measures and so along with other local schools, Fitzharrys School uses these approaches. If you would like further information; leaflets are available on request from the County Attendance Team (Email: attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk). Our attendance policy includes these measures and copies of this are also available on request.

If your child is absent you must inform school of the reason for this on the dedicated Absence Line (01235 538243) on the first day of absence before 10am, and either speak to the Attendance Officer, or leave an answer phone message.

Working together we can tackle truancy.

Referral criteria for intervention from the Attendance and Engagement Service

- See attached Case Process Flow Chart.
- Missing pupils will be referred to the Pupil Tracking Officer/Abingdon HUB once school staff have tried and failed to contact parents/carers.

Students who are late in the morning - notice to students

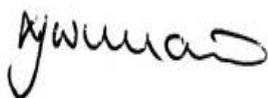
Students should be here at 8.35am to be sat in their form rooms for Fitz Focus starting at 8.40am. Fitz Focus is a timetabled lesson which must be attended. Punctuality is an important life skill. If you are persistently late for work, you would be sacked.

- 1. If students arrive between 8.35am and 8.50am, a senior member of teaching staff will give out a red slip explaining that they have a lunchtime detention for being late. They MAY be excused if they have a note and a suitable reason for their lateness.*
- 2. If students arrive after 8.50am, they must sign in with Mrs Bradley. A slip will be issued that must be shown to their teacher explaining that they have either signed in with a legitimate reason (yellow) or are late for no good reason (red) and have a lunchtime detention.*
- 3. If you arrive at a lesson without a slip from Mrs Bradley, your teacher will send you back to sign in and get one.*
- 4. If you are late because you have had an appointment, you must bring a note from home explaining this. If you do not have a note, you will have a lunchtime detention.*
- 5. Saying you got up late or had to go the shop is not an excuse. You have to be here on time and have to organise yourself accordingly.*
- 6. If you were ill in the morning and come in late, you must have a note from a parent.*
- 7. If you are on a bus that is late through no fault of your own you will be excused the late detention. This will not apply if you simply miss the bus.*
- 8. You must go to S5 at 1.20pm on the day you were late. You will be given a slip to remind you. This gives you 10 minutes to get lunch and get to the room. This detention will be for 25 minutes with a senior member of staff.*
- 9. If you choose not to attend the lunchtime detention, you will have to stay behind after school that night for 45 minutes. We will call your parents to let you know you are staying behind because you were late and because you choose not to attend the lunchtime detention. We do not need your parent's permission to keep you behind.*
- 10. If you choose not to attend the after school detention you will stay behind after school for an extended Senior ASDT until 4:30pm on Friday.*
- 11. If you choose not to attend the extended senior after school detention, you will spend the next day in isolation and stay behind for an hour after the isolation.*

Monitoring and evaluation

The impact of this policy will be monitored at the fortnightly meetings between the Attendance Coordinator and the Pastoral Director. There will be a formal annual review of the statistics and the policy to the relevant Governors' Committee.

Reviewed by Governors at the Community Support and Partnerships Committee Meeting



Signed:

Date: 28th April 2015

Dear Parents and Carers

Requests for Exceptional Leave of Absence during Term-Time

There is now strong evidence that any term-time absence can be damaging to a student's education. In making a decision, the school must consider factors such as the reason for and the length of the proposed absence, its impact on the student's education, the student's overall attendance pattern, family circumstances and the rarity of the trip.

There is a clear link between good attendance at school and achievement in exams. Government figures from 2012 show that nationally 73% of students with attendance rates of over 95% achieved 5 A*-C, including English and Maths at GCSE. Of those children who had attendance of 91-95%, only 40% achieved the same results and this drops to 22% for those with attendance between 85-90%.

Please use the form on the reverse of this letter if you would like to apply for permission for exceptional leave of absence from School during term-time. There are some important considerations that you should think of before applying. Please read the following points carefully:

- As of September 2013, the Department for Education has changed the regulations about term time holidays. Parents no longer have the opportunity to request up to two weeks holiday during term time.
- Requests for holidays during term time will no longer be authorised. If a child is absent during term time for a holiday a penalty notice warning will be issued. If another is taken during the same year, a penalty notice will be issued by the Attendance and Engagement Officer.
- A Headteacher can receive requests for exceptional reasons for absence of one or two days, but these will only be authorised if the child's attendance is over 95%.
- Absence must be requested in advance. If it is not requested in advance, or taken despite refusal, it will count as unauthorised absence. Retrospective approval is not possible.
- All schools are obliged to report unauthorised absence to the Local Education Authority and the Department for Education and Skills.
- No absence will be authorised during practice or public examination periods.
- Any absences are always a matter of grave concern. Approval will not normally be given when the student's attendance is already below 95%. Please note that the School is obliged to report attendance below 85% to the Attendance and Engagement Service. Students with any unauthorised absence will not be considered until the unauthorised absence is resolved.

If, having read the above, you still wish to proceed, then complete the form on the reverse and return it to the Headteacher. Applications must include the student's name and tutor group, the dates of the absence, and a clear explanation of why you are unable to complete the activity in term-time. These new regulations will help to support students' success at Fitzharrys

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Dennett
Headteacher

FITZHARRYS SCHOOL EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

To the Headteacher:

I request exceptional leave of absence for my child to be taken in term-time.

Name of Student:	Tutor Group:
------------------	--------------

Inclusive dates of the leave of absence, from	/	/	to	/	/
---	---	---	----	---	---

Date of application:	/	/
----------------------	---	---

Reason why this absence cannot be taken outside term-time:

Name of Parent:

Signature:

NB The Headteacher will consider this application and will reply quickly. Please do not book any arrangements until you know that the absence will be authorised.

For Office Use Only			
Attendance this year		sessions	
Authorised absence this year		sessions	
Unauthorised absence this year		sessions	

ATTENDANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT POLICY

16

Exceptional leave of absence	GRANTED / DECLINED
------------------------------	--------------------