



Attendance Procedures

(Including procedures relating to leave of absence taken in term-time)

Amended: July 2022

Next Review date: July 2023

Agreed by the Local Governing Body: Oct 2022

Context

Fort Pitt Grammar School recognises the high correlation between achievement and attendance. In order to maintain the already high levels of attendance (*our expectation is that students should strive for 100% attendance with a minimum of 96%*), there is a clearly defined process communicated to all stakeholders. The key principle followed are:

- ❖ The importance of good attendance is an integral part of the Home/School agreement.
- ❖ There are clear procedures for the reporting of absence. (Appendix 1 Flowchart)
- ❖ Leave of absence during the school terms is strongly discouraged (Appendix 2: Authorised leave)
- ❖ The MIS system is used effectively to monitor attendance at form time and in lessons.
- ❖ Attendance figures are reported annually and appropriate targets are set for the following year.
- ❖ Attendance figures are monitored on a regular basis by the pastoral team and appropriate action, relevant to each case, is taken when required
- ❖ There is regular and close liaison with external agencies to deal with problems of irregular attendance. Our Attendance Officer (AO) works closely with the pastoral team to support students and families experiencing problems with attendance.
- ❖ We keep accurate records of all exclusions and, in accordance with statutory guidance, report them to the Local Governing Body.
- ❖ We continue to monitor termly the attendance of key groups including 'Looked After Children', those from 'minority groups' and 'vulnerable' students regularly assessing impact.

Guidance

- ❖ Parents of students have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis.
- ❖ Every half-day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. The cause of absence is always required.
- ❖ Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an unavoidable reason.
- ❖ Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider unavoidable. This figure will include truancy, unexplained absences, lateness beyond form time and avoidable events.
- ❖ As recommended by Medway Code of Practice – where a parent who does not live with the child asks to be kept informed of attendance issues the school will comply as long as the parent has parental responsibility. The parent with day-to-day care and responsibility is made aware of the request and the school should be assured that this request does not put the family in danger.

Procedures

- ❖ Students will be in form rooms for morning registration by 8.25 am at the latest with registers open from then until 8.40 am)
- ❖ Students arriving at school after 8.25 am should sign in with the Attendance Officer to ensure attendance is registered.
- ❖ Afternoon registration will be taken by teaching staff promptly at the start of period 6 (2.10pm-2.15pm).
- ❖ Parents / Carers should telephone or email the school on the first day of any absence. Additionally, an explanatory note or email should be sent to the school on the student's return.
- ❖ If no call or email is received on the first morning offering a reason for absence parents will be contacted via text initially by the AO to ascertain the reason for the absence. If no reply is given a phone call will need to be made and logged. Safeguarding of students is paramount and it is essential to ascertain the location of a student not in school and all attempts to contact will be employed using all contacts on the system.
- ❖ Whilst medical or dental appointments should be made outside of school time sometimes this is not feasible and in these instances communication for the absence must be given to the Form Tutor at least 24 hours beforehand and this is then sent to the AO. Proof must be shown to the school receptionist when signing out.

Illness at School

If a student is ill in school, they should report to the trained first aiders at reception who will decide whether or not to contact parents. Students are not permitted to call parents themselves in this instance. If parents do receive a call from their daughter, they should tell them to go to reception and then call the school to speak to her directly. All such absences will usually be authorised.

Lateness

- ❖ Students who arrive late for registration (i.e. after 8.25a.m.) will be recorded as "Late".
- ❖ A student who arrives late must report to the school office first to sign the late book.
- ❖ A student is deemed absent for the morning session if they arrive after 8.40am. The absence will be classed as authorised if they provide an adequate explanation, confirmed in writing, but unauthorised if the explanation is unacceptable.
- ❖ Frequent lateness may result in sanctions, e.g. detentions being administered and parental consultation for serious cases.

Fixed Penalty notices

A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued where a parent has caused 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a school term. The evidence of a term-time holiday policy allows the Local Authority to issue a FPN alongside the need for school warning letters. The sanction is £60.00 if paid within 21 days of issue, £120.00 if paid within 28 days of issue and an automatic referral to the Magistrates court if not paid.

Appendix 1: Authorised Leave (taken from DfE guidelines)

Permission for leave of absence in term-time should only be granted where:

- ❖ The parent can demonstrate that the reason for leave of absence satisfies exceptional circumstances and, in the judgement of the school, the benefit of the absence outweighs the benefit of attendance at school
- ❖ The absence does not occur during a time of academic importance such as GCSEs, A levels, end year examinations, work experience, or other important school event
- ❖ A formal application must be made in writing
- ❖ Only one period of leave should be granted in an academic year. Requests for 10 days over several different periods will be declined.
- ❖ Reasonable notice must be given - 4 weeks would allow work to be prepared and set
- ❖ Retrospective permission will not be granted if sought.

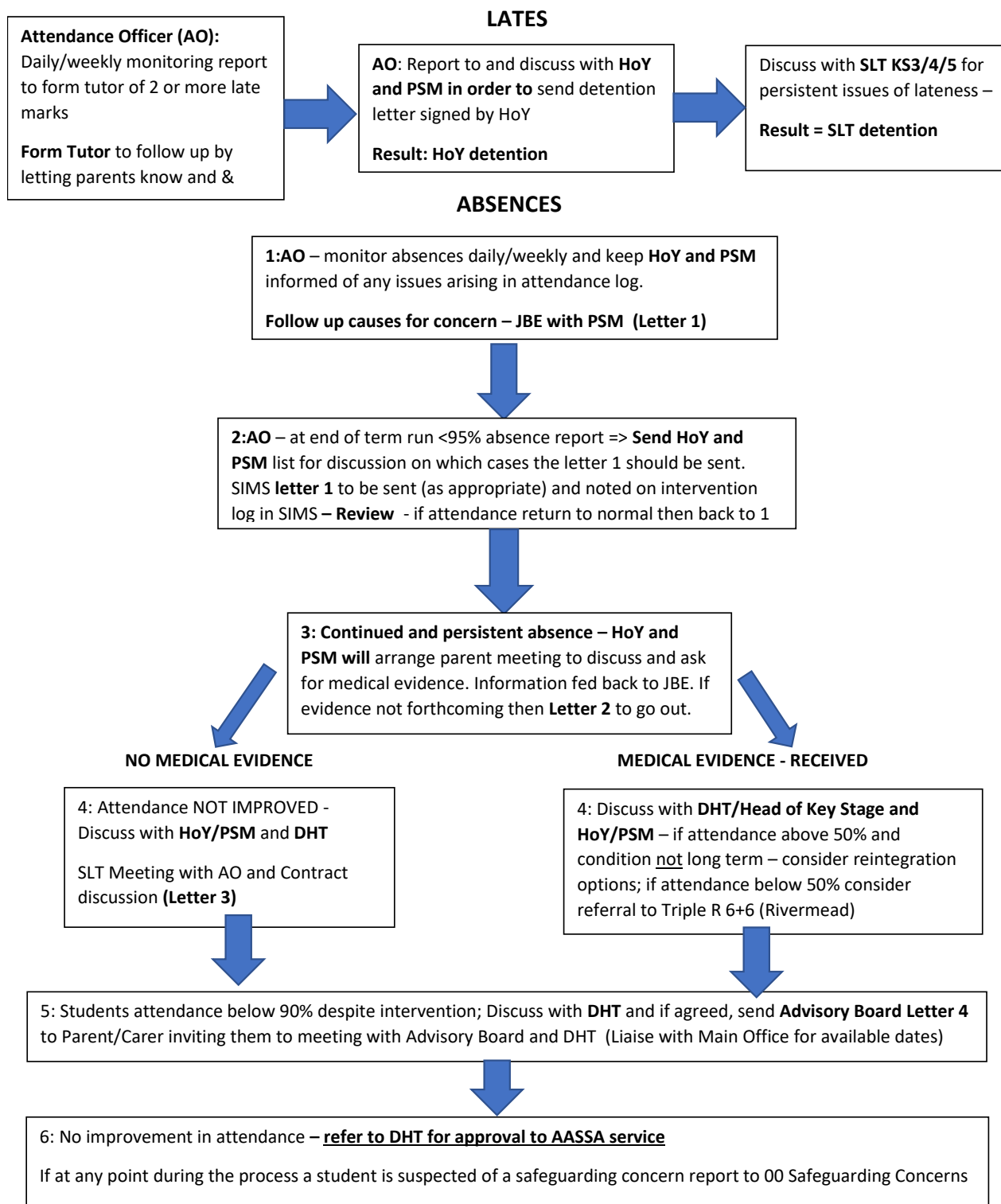
Only when these conditions are satisfied may authorisation of leave be considered. Leave will only be authorised by the Headteacher in very exceptional circumstances. Should leave be agreed, it is expected that all work set by teachers will be completed during the absence.

Examples of requests and school's likely decision

| Request | Likely Decision |
|---|--|
| Funerals and other significant family events | Normally HT will authorise a suitable time for compassionate leave* |
| Participation in sporting or artistic events not arranged by the school | Will consider authorisation depending on nature of event and attendance record of student* |
| Rehearsals for licensed pantomime or other theatrical performances | Will consider authorisation depending on timing and attendance record of student* |
| Family holiday having to be taken in term time because of one parent's working arrangements | Unable to authorise |
| Attendance at sporting events (e.g. Wimbledon) or local theatre events | Unable to authorise |

*Authorisation letter required

Appendix 2: The Attendance and Lates Flowchart



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Code:

AO = Attendance Officer / SLT = Senior Leadership Team / DHT= Deputy Headteacher /
HoY = Head of Year / PSM = Pastoral Support Manager