



Unit 19, Avenue B, Nottingham, NG1 1DU

## **Fast Forward - Working together to improve Attendance Policy**

FAST FORWARD is an DJ & Music Studies provision who caters for up to 70 students aged 11-18 years who attend on a different ratio of days a week. We cover NCC and Nottinghamshire schools/partnerships. The students exhibit a variety of complex educational, social, emotional and mental health difficulties, which have impeded personal developmental and educational success.

Some of the students have stated diagnoses. Some of our learners have visited a variety of Alternative Provisions or Schools prior to attending FAST FORWARD. They can arrive at FAST FORWARD very disengaged with education and home life.

### **Introduction:**

*From August 2024, this document replaces all previous guidance on school attendance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities with the exception of the existing statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures. 5. This guidance will be updated and reissued ahead of the academic year 2024-2025. Government Website.*

Looking towards the parental responsibility for attendance being more apparent under the current situation and post covid attendance concerns and coding. Updates reflect the changes over the last academic year, August being the last update.

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

The "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" guidance, updated in August 2024, introduces several key changes from its 2023 version (all other sections remain unchanged):

1. **Clarification on Attendance and School Culture:** The updated guidance emphasises the link between improving attendance and fostering a positive school culture. It highlights the importance of collaborating with families to address attendance barriers, moving away from punitive measures towards supportive interventions.
2. **Revised Legal Requirements:** Reflecting changes in the law, the guidance updates protocols for maintaining school attendance and admission registers. This includes a revised set of attendance codes, guidelines for granting leaves of absence, and protocols for accessing and sharing attendance information, as introduced through the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
3. **National Framework for Penalty Notices:** A new National Framework for issuing penalty notices has been established, detailing when Notices to Improve, penalty notices, or other legal interventions should be pursued if support is deemed inappropriate, unsuccessful, or not engaged with.
4. **Terminology Update:** The term 'parenting contracts' has been changed to 'attendance contracts' to more accurately represent the agreements between parents, schools, and local authorities.



Unit 19, Avenue B, Nottingham, NG1 1DU

**5. Enhanced Expectations for Schools:**

- **Support for Pupils with Health Needs:** The guidance clarifies schools' roles in supporting pupils absent due to physical or mental health issues, including the handling of medical evidence and additional support for those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- **Data Sharing Requirements:** New requirements for data sharing have been introduced through the Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.
- **Senior Attendance Champions:** The expectations for schools' senior attendance champions have been clarified.
- **Communication with Youth Offending Teams:** Schools are now expected to inform a pupil's youth offending team worker of any unexplained absences.

**6. Local Authority Responsibilities:**

- **Additional Attendance Services:** The guidance provides further details on additional attendance services that may be offered to schools.
- **Cross-Border Pupils:** Responsibilities concerning cross-border pupils have been clarified.
- **Targeting Support Meetings:** Guidance on conducting effective Targeting Support Meetings has been expanded.
- **Independent Schools:** Flexibility in how local authorities work with independent schools has been introduced to better suit the needs of different local independent schools.
- **Cross-Partnership Ownership:** The importance of cross-partnership ownership of attendance improvement has been emphasised.

These updates aim to create a more supportive and collaborative approach to improving school attendance, ensuring that all stakeholders work together effectively to address and overcome barriers to regular attendance.

NCC authority will determine its own format and process of their Attendance Data Collection.

**School/FAST FORWARD attendance is to be mandatory from September 2024 from the guidance of the Government.**

All of the usual rules for attendance will apply from September 2024; However, it is the responsibility from September 2024 that the:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child attends regularly at school/FAST FORWARD; where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence;
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

**Where individual students have identified problems, these will be handled with care and sensitivity to support the student and the family.**



Unit 19, Avenue B, Nottingham, NG1 1DU

If students and families are anxious about returning to school / their educational setting; The Government has made it clear that all other students must attend school. They state that Schools/FAST FORWARD should bear in mind the potential concerns of pupils, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and put the right support in place to address this.

If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, we recommend settings discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school or FAST FORWARD.

Settings should be clear with parents that students of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, if the student has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance).

The Government recognises that some children and young people with EHC plans will need preparation for their return to full provision. This might include, for instance, visits to the setting, social stories, and any other approaches that settings and local authorities would normally use to enable a child or young person with SEND/NEET/LAC who has spent some time out of education, to return to full time attendance.

### **Registration**

The FAST FORWARD Admin Team uses an email-based system to contact each individual school/referrer for registration. Attendance is registered at the beginning of each session (usually half days). Staff also record attendance at individual sessions. Calls are made to the parents/carers of absent students to find out why they are not attending. All in line with Data Protection ensure using Password Protected emails. GDPR reviews of school contacts are updated every 6 months to ensure Attendance Data is sent to correct persons. Contact sheets updated by Office Manager.

Contact information often on referral forms/Service Level Agreements, phone calls to confirm information is done by the Director Steve Lee.

### **Use of Codes**

Removal of Codes over 2022 in relation to Covid-19 have been withdrawn.

SEPTEMBER 2023

*\*In line with our transition to living with COVID-19 and the latest public health advice, we are no longer advising schools to record pupils who are not attending school because of COVID-19 using Code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus). Where a pupil is not attending because they have symptoms of COVID-19 or have had a positive test, schools should record this using Code I (illness) unless another more appropriate code applies. Schools no longer need to record pupils who do not attend for reasons related to COVID-19, using Code X*

Attendance registers are completed using the codes outlined by the Education Welfare Service. All completed by 10am to relevant external bodies.



Unit 19, Avenue B, Nottingham, NG1 1DU

### **Authorisation and unauthorised absences- ABSCONDING (SEE BESPOKE POLICY)**

All unexplained absences will be claimed as unauthorised. All absences will be followed up and reported. Staff will judge whether absences that are explained can be judged to be authorised or unauthorised. All absences explained by students must be confirmed by a parent/carer before it can be authorised. All LEA/Schools are contacted, referred to Safeguarding if concerns, Keeping Children Safe in Education, if under Child Protection. Communications are activated to all if persistent. Attendance will allow patterns to be identified and interventions implemented for individuals.

### **Interventions:**

**The key to all attendance interventions is persistence. Staff need to be rigorous and thorough in using the strategies detailed. These interventions must be logged in detail so that they can be used as supporting evidence for the Education Welfare Service.**

- Daily absences for identified students is followed up within 1 hour of the start of the session on the first day of absence
- All unexplained absence for other students is followed up by the end of the working day
- The most appropriate and effective means of communication is used e.g., texting, phoning, emailing etc.
- Attendance Data collated and), Home visits initiated to focus on long term absences and for low attend Managed by Steve Lee.
- Intervention work, Multi Agency targets may not be met, to consult with designated persons. All notified.
- Possible change of days to meet needs of learners, possible reasons why they do not attend on a particular day, but others. Change of groups is an alternative and activity.

The Government are also asking Schools/FAST FORWARD and Local Authorities (NCC/) to:

- communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate) throughout the summer, ahead of the new school year;
- identify students who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them. This should include disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic;
- use the additional catch-up funding schools will receive, as well as existing pastoral and support services, attendance staff and resources and schools' pupil premium funding to put measures in place for those families who will need additional support to secure pupils' regular attendance;
- work closely with other professionals as appropriate to support the return to school, including continuing to notify the child's social worker, if they have one, of non-attendance

### **Punctuality**

FAST FORWARD have set high expectations around punctuality as it is viewed as an important life skill for our students. However, the project recognises that for some of our student's sensitivity an individual approach needs to be taken to support them to develop this skill. It is the responsibility of the



Unit 19, Avenue B, Nottingham, NG1 1DU

Course Leader to make appropriate interventions for individual students to improve and reward punctuality.

The Local Authority's guidance for schools on supporting pupils with additional needs will be taken from Nottinghamshire County Council.

For further support you can contact Steve Lee at FAST FORWARD (Director)  
If you have any queries in relation to this or any other attendance issues please contact:  
steve.lee@fastforwardmusic.net

**Children Missing from Education/See FAST FORWARD Keeping Children Safe in Education, Missing from Education Policy/Safeguarding Policies for further protocol.**

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities.

This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage.

Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their provision of unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

Knowing where children are during provision hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing provision can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when students are not at provision. This means we need to have at least two up to date contact numbers for parents/carers and Trust 'best practice' of three. Parents should remember to update the provision as soon as possible if the numbers change.

In response to the guidance in DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022) the provision has:

When a pupil leaves the provision, we will record the name of the pupil's new provision and their expected start date.

All Data is archived in line with the GDPR 2022 Regulations, See FAST FORWARD Policy for GDPR and Data Retention/Deletion. And the new Data Reform Bill 2023/4.

All Data is updated with an Audit, for contacts and information via email communications is kept up to date.

FAST FORWARD has tracking in place via the Office Manager. Sign in and Sign Out book all Data Protected.

**Those Responsible:**

Nottinghamshire LEA attendance: steve.lee@fastforwardmusic.net



Unit 19, Avenue B, Nottingham, NG1 1DU

Steve Lee (Director) oversees Attendance and Home Visit concerns.

**Written by** Adele Meek (QA Consultant)

Approved by Director Steve Lee

7<sup>th</sup> September 2024 / Review 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025.

Policy reviewed in line with Government Changes and FAST FORWARD will be updated via QA reviews, internal inspections and advisories.