

Femtinis Learning Hub

Attendance & Engagement Policy

1. Purpose

At Femtinis Learning Hub, we believe that children benefit most when they are **present, prepared and meaningfully engaged** in their learning.

Our programmes are designed around practical experiences, discussion, experimentation, projects and collaborative learning. In many cases, one session builds upon another. Regular attendance and active engagement therefore help children to develop confidence, relationships, knowledge and practical skills over time.

This policy sets out our expectations for:

- attendance;
- punctuality;
- reporting absence;
- readiness for learning;
- engagement during sessions;
- supporting children where engagement is difficult; and
- responding to persistent attendance or engagement concerns.

This policy should be read alongside our Admissions & Participation Policy and Terms & Conditions.

2. Our Approach to Attendance

We recognise that families attending Femtinis may have different circumstances and that occasional absence is inevitable.

Children may be unwell, families may travel, appointments may arise and home-educating families in particular may have learning opportunities and commitments which do not follow a conventional school timetable.

Our approach is therefore not based on achieving a particular percentage attendance figure.

Instead, we ask families to recognise that **a place on an ongoing Femtos programme is a commitment to participate in that programme.**

Regular attendance matters because absence may affect:

- continuity of learning;
- progression through a programme;
- practical skills development;
- ongoing experiments or projects;
- collaborative or group work;
- relationships with staff and other students; and
- the child's overall experience of the programme.

For one-off workshops and activities, the same expectation of punctuality and communication applies, although ongoing attendance expectations will not be relevant.

3. Parent/Carer Responsibilities

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child:

- attends sessions for which they are booked;
- arrives on time;
- arrives appropriately dressed and equipped;
- brings any required programme or subject-specific resources;
- is sufficiently well to participate;
- understands that Femtos is a learning environment; and
- is collected in accordance with Femtos collection arrangements.

Parents/carers should support a positive attitude towards attendance and communicate with us where difficulties arise.

We would much rather understand that a child is experiencing a genuine barrier to attendance than simply see them repeatedly absent without explanation.

4. Reporting Absence

Where a child will not be attending a booked session, parents/carers should notify Femtos **as soon as reasonably possible and preferably before the session begins.**

Where known in advance, planned absences should be communicated in advance.

Parents/carers should provide sufficient information for us to understand the nature of the absence where this is relevant to the child's attendance, wellbeing or return.

Notification of an absence does not automatically create an entitlement to:

- a refund;
- credit;
- transfer;
- replacement session;
- catch-up session; or
- alternative provision.

Refunds, cancellations, transfers and missed sessions are governed by the applicable Femtos Terms & Conditions.

5. Illness and Fitness to Attend

Children should not attend where they are too unwell to participate appropriately or where their attendance may pose an unreasonable risk to themselves or others.

Where a child becomes unwell during a session, we may contact their parent/carer and require them to be collected.

Parents/carers must remain contactable while their child attends without them and must arrange prompt collection where requested.

Relevant medical conditions, allergies and changes affecting a child's safe participation must be communicated to Femtos in accordance with our Admissions & Participation and health and safety arrangements.

6. Punctuality

Arriving on time helps children settle, understand what is happening and participate from the beginning of the session.

This is particularly important for practical activities where staff may begin with:

- safety instructions;
- demonstrations;
- equipment briefings;
- experimental methods;

- group allocations; or
- information needed for the activity that follows.

Children should therefore arrive ready to begin at their advertised session start time.

Children must **not be brought into or left at the Hub more than 5 minutes before the advertised start time** unless this has been agreed with Femtos in advance.

Where a child arrives late, they should be appropriately signed in and staff made aware of their arrival.

Late Arrival and Practical Activities

Where important safety information, demonstrations or instructions have already been delivered, a late-arriving child may need to wait before joining an activity.

Where it would be unsafe or impractical for the child to join after missing essential instructions or a critical stage of an activity, they may be unable to participate in that particular activity.

Where reasonably possible, staff may offer an alternative activity, but this cannot always be guaranteed.

7. What We Mean by Engagement

Attendance and engagement are not the same thing.

A child can be physically present without meaningfully accessing the learning experience.

At Femtos, **engagement does not mean sitting silently, completing every task in exactly the same way or behaving like every other child.**

Children learn differently.

Meaningful engagement might include:

- participating in an experiment or practical activity;
- asking questions;
- contributing to discussion;
- observing carefully before attempting something;
- exploring an idea independently;
- working collaboratively;
- designing, building, drawing or creating;
- explaining an idea;
- attempting a challenge;

- reflecting on an outcome;
- making choices within an activity;
- listening or watching a demonstration;
- communicating understanding in a way appropriate to the child; or
- returning to an activity after an appropriate break.

We are interested in whether a child is **connecting with the learning**, not whether every child looks engaged in exactly the same way.

8. Supporting Engagement

Children are not expected to arrive motivated and enthusiastic every minute of every session.

There will be days when a child is tired, distracted, frustrated, anxious, overwhelmed or simply less interested in a particular activity.

Staff may support engagement through:

- encouragement;
- questioning;
- breaking an activity into manageable stages;
- offering appropriate choices;
- changing the level of challenge;
- providing additional explanation;
- allowing appropriate processing time;
- connecting learning to the child's interests;
- offering movement or regulation breaks;
- changing the way a child participates;
- providing reasonable adjustments where appropriate; or
- giving a child time to observe before joining in.

Where there is a persistent change in a child's engagement, we may discuss this with the child and/or their parent/carer to understand what may be contributing to it.

9. Choice and Engagement

We want children to have appropriate agency within their learning.

Children may therefore sometimes be able to choose:

- how they approach a task;

- which question they investigate;
- which materials they use;
- how they present their learning;
- whether they work independently or collaboratively;
- which aspect of a topic they explore further; or
- between appropriate activities or approaches offered by staff.

However, **choice does not mean that all participation is optional.**

Femtos is a learning environment. Children enrolled on a programme are expected, with appropriate support and reasonable adjustments where required, to engage with its educational purpose.

Children cannot use choice to override:

- safety instructions;
- safeguarding requirements;
- restrictions on equipment or areas;
- reasonable staff instructions; or
- the rights of other children to learn and participate.

10. When a Child Does Not Want to Participate

There is a difference between a child occasionally not wanting to complete a particular activity and a child persistently disengaging from the provision.

If a child does not want to participate, staff should where appropriate seek to understand **why**.

There may be a barrier such as:

- not understanding the activity;
- finding it too easy or too difficult;
- sensory discomfort;
- anxiety;
- tiredness;
- frustration;
- difficulty with another child;
- fear of getting something wrong;
- lack of confidence;
- communication difficulties;
- emotional dysregulation; or
- simply needing some time before joining in.

Where reasonably possible, staff will seek to address the barrier rather than treating non-participation automatically as poor behaviour.

An alternative way of engaging may sometimes be offered.

However, Femtos is not able to provide an entirely separate programme for a child who persistently chooses not to participate in the learning activities for which they are attending.

11. Breaks and Regulation

Appropriate breaks can support engagement.

Children may need time to:

- move;
- regulate;
- process information;
- have a drink;
- eat at designated times;
- step away from a demanding activity; or
- prepare themselves to return to learning.

A break should support the child's ability to participate rather than routinely replacing participation.

Where a child requires substantially more frequent, prolonged or individually supervised breaks than can reasonably be accommodated within the programme, we may discuss appropriate support arrangements with the parent/carer in accordance with our Admissions & Participation Policy.

12. Persistent Disengagement

Where a child persistently does not engage with the educational provision, we will seek to understand the circumstances before determining what action is appropriate.

This may include:

- speaking with the child;
- discussing concerns with the parent/carer;
- considering whether the activity remains appropriately challenging;
- considering reasonable adjustments;

- identifying barriers to participation;
- agreeing strategies to support engagement;
- reviewing whether a different Femtinis programme may be more appropriate; or
- agreeing a period of review.

Our aim is not to penalise a child for finding something difficult.

However, where a child persistently does not participate to an extent that they are receiving little meaningful benefit from the programme, or their disengagement significantly affects the experience of others, we may review whether continued attendance in that provision remains appropriate.

Any decision concerning continued suitability will be managed in accordance with our Admissions & Participation Policy.

13. Persistent or Unexplained Absence

Where a child is enrolled on an ongoing programme and develops a pattern of repeated or unexplained absence, Femtinis may contact the parent/carer to discuss the situation.

We may consider:

- the reason for absence;
- whether the absence is temporary or likely to continue;
- the effect on the child's learning or progression;
- whether the child can meaningfully rejoin the programme;
- whether additional support or adjustments are appropriate; and
- whether the family wishes to continue with the place.

Where absence means that a child has missed essential learning, practical instruction or a substantial part of an ongoing project, it may not always be possible for staff to recreate missed provision individually.

Where repeated absence means that continued participation is no longer educationally appropriate or practical, the child's place may be reviewed.

Any financial implications remain subject to the applicable Terms & Conditions.

14. Children's Views About Attendance and Engagement

Where appropriate, children themselves should be included in conversations about their attendance and engagement.

We may ask:

What are you enjoying?

What aren't you enjoying?

Is there something making it difficult to join in?

Is the work too easy, too difficult or about right?

What would help?

Is there something you'd like to do differently?

A child's view will not necessarily determine the outcome, but it should be listened to and taken seriously.

We want children to develop the confidence to recognise and communicate what helps them learn.

15. Working With Parents and Carers

Attendance and engagement work best when there is open communication between Femtos and families.

Parents/carers are encouraged to tell us where:

- their child is becoming reluctant to attend;
- something has changed at home which may affect engagement;
- their child has expressed concerns about a session;
- their child is finding work too easy or too difficult;
- there are friendship or social concerns;
- additional needs are affecting attendance or engagement; or
- they have noticed a significant change in their child's experience.

Similarly, where we notice a pattern of concern, we may contact the parent/carer rather than waiting for the issue to become more significant.

16. Relationship With Admissions & Participation

This policy concerns a child's **attendance and engagement once they have been admitted to Femtos provision.**

Admission, continuing suitability, additional needs, one-to-one support, parental supervision, behaviour and safety are addressed in greater detail within our **Admissions & Participation Policy**.

Where an attendance or engagement concern indicates that:

- a child's needs have changed;
- additional support may be required;
- previously unknown needs have become apparent;
- the existing provision may no longer be appropriate; or
- safe and meaningful participation is becoming difficult,

the child's arrangements may be reviewed under the Admissions & Participation Policy.

17. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the Femtinis Learning Hub:

- **Admissions & Participation Policy**
 - **Terms & Conditions**
 - **Behaviour, Wellbeing & Inclusion Policy**
 - **Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy**
 - **Health & Safety Policy**
 - **First Aid Policy**
 - and other applicable Femtinis policies and procedures.
-

18. Our Commitment

At Femtinis, good attendance matters because **being there creates the opportunity to learn**.

Engagement matters because **being there is only the beginning**.

We want children to arrive knowing that they are expected to participate, but also knowing that there is more than one way to be an engaged learner.

Our responsibility is to create experiences worth engaging with, notice when a child is struggling to connect with their learning, listen to what may be getting in the way and respond appropriately.

In return, we ask children and families to treat their place at Femtinis as a commitment: **to attend, to communicate and to engage with the opportunities being offered**.