Attendance Policy V1

Document Management

This document was adopted by the Governing Body/SLT: September 2023

This policy should be reviewed every two years.

Document Control

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Reference	Description	Date
E Dixon	Creation of policy in line with new guidance	August 2023

For clarity throughout this policy the words Franche Community Primary School, school and/or setting refer to all childcare services provided on the Franche Community Primary School site. Including: Children's Centre, TOTS@Franche, Holiday Club and Breakfast/After School Club.

Contents

Aims

At Franche Community Primary School we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and by creating an ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance

- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Being at School

School education lays vital foundations in a child's life. Research proves the link between regular school attendance and educational progress and attainment. We want to work in partnership with parents/carers to make pupils' experience positive and thereby enable them to make a success of their education and realise their full potential. We encourage parents/carers to ensure their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems are identified and acted upon promptly. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Ensuring there is a link Governor for attendance in place.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Engage with the school's vulnerability meetings to discuss children of concern
- Work with the Attendance Officer to devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Supporting the Attendance Officer with arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Emma Running and can be contacted by calling the school office on 01562 751788 or by emailing: Attendance@francheprimary.worcs.sch.uk

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Checking ParentMail and the answering machine for messages about attendance on a daily basis
- Following up unexplained absences and obtaining explanations from parents/carers through first day phone calls and where necessary safe and well visits.
- Requesting medical evidence if the school considers it necessary, to support long term or frequent absences due to medical conditions or ill health;
- Welcoming and signing in pupils arriving late to school on a daily basis

> Communicating with parents when a child's punctuality becomes a concern. This will be when there have been more than 3 instances of lateness within a school term.

> Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

> Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher

> Working with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence

> Advising the Headteacher, or Assistant Headteachers in the Heads absence, when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Rachael Ellis and can be contacted via 01562 751788 or by emailing attendance@francheprimary.worcs.sch.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office twice a day using the SIMS system.

Class teachers will support the Attendance Officer by promoting good attendance at all times and devise strategies to support individual pupils to attend regularly and punctually.

Class teachers will report any known reason for absence directly to the Attendance Officer either verbally, via SIMS or via CPOMS.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

> Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on SIMS.

> Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

> Support the Attendance Officer by signing in pupils arriving late to school.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends school every day on time

> Call the school, or sending a message on ParentMail, to report their child's absence before 8:30 on the day of the absence, unless a set period of absence has been notified in advance, and on each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return

> Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day or where unavoidable that children return from appointments during the school day.

> Discuss any problems with school that may affect their child's school attendance

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time

> Attend school punctually

> Attend appropriately prepared for the day ahead

> Discuss any problems with school that may affect their school attendance

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

> Present

> Attending an approved off-site educational activity

> Absent

> Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

> The original entry

> The amended entry

> The reason for the amendment

> The date on which the amendment was made

> The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

> Whether the absence is authorised or not

> The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

> The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:40 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40 and will be kept open until 9:00. Pupils who arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as late for school and this will become an unauthorised absence after 9:20am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00 and will be kept open until 1:10pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office or by sending a message via ParentMail. (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Government guidance states that:

 '*schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. As head teachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.'*

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and can provide proof.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Requesting a leave of absence:

- If a parent//carer wishes to request leave of absence during term time a leave of absence form must be completed. Forms are available from the school office or by emailing attendance@francheprimary.worcs.sch.uk   This form must be completed and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher on behalf of the governors no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date.
- If the pupil is kept away for longer than was communicated, the absence will be coded as unauthorised. In accordance with government regulations the school is unable to give retrospective approval.
- If the parents/carers do not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised
- Applications for leaves of absence requested on the day, without exceptional circumstances, will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Medical evidence may also be requested if there is a period of illness at the beginning or end of a requested period of leave.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

> Before the register has closed (9:00am) will be marked as present, using the appropriate code

> After the register has closed at 9:00am but before 9:20 will be marked as late.

> After the register has closed and after 9:20am will be marked as unauthorised absence unless there has been a request for leave of absence supported with evidence.

> School may bring forward the time at which a pupil is either recorded as late and/or have the register closed when that pupil has been identified as being persistently late for school and

insufficient attempt has been made to remedy the situation. In that instance parent/carers will be informed of the new time by which the pupil will be recorded as late and/or have the register closed to him/her.

> The school will speak to and may write to parents of children who are persistently late to inform them of the escalating concern. They may be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the lateness and ways to improve this.

> Persistent lateness may also be referred to the EWO.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

> ParentMail all families on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.

> A first day phone call will be made to any families that do not respond to the ParentMail and where a family may be considered vulnerable. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may communicate via ParentMail, speak to other emergency contacts or carry out a safe and well check.

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained.

> Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer and may make a referral to the Family Front Door for further family support.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via the child's school reports and at Parent's Evening and at regular intervals throughout the year.

Where there is a concern about a child's absence and in all cases where the child has missed 10 or more school sessions, a letter will be issued and parents may be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the level of absence and ways to improve this.

Statistical information relating to pupil outcomes and attendance will be shared with all families at the start of the year and again with families where attendance is an emerging concern, at relevant points in the year.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or by emailing attendance@franchprimary.worcs.sch.uk The headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can issue a penalty notice to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

> Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

As a Worcestershire County Council school a penalty notice will be issued when a child has more than 12 sessions (6 days) of unauthorized holiday absence in any 12 school week period.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Franche Primary school will: Encourage good and regular attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition; including but not limited to recognising weekly best phase attendance and punctuality, termly individual 100% attendance and annual attendance upwards of 98%. Pupils who achieve cumulative 100% attendance are individually celebrated

Franche Primary will also celebrate the attendance of those pupils with chronic illness or other mitigating circumstances where they have attended school as regularly as they are physically able to do so.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

Franche primary School will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

> Liaise with class teachers and other staff regularly to identify any wider school issues.

> Share information on a regular basis with the wider school vulnerability team to identify any contributing factors and actions for improvement.

> Collect pupil-level absence data each term and published this at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

> Compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board on a termly basis.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

> Analyse data based on attendance and its correlation to attainment/progress.

> Expect all staff to use attendance to identify pupils at risk of low attendance and work with, encourage and support pupils and families to attend school regularly and on time.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school sessions, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school sessions.

The school will:

> Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

> Communicate regularly with parents of children who are persistently or severely absent.

> Raise children/families who are persistently or severely absent at the schools vulnerability meetings to enable wider discussion of need and to identify lines of support.

> Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

> Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Attendance Officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection and safeguarding policy

> Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	**Definition**	**Scenario**

Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day