

# **Attendance policy**

## **Frederick Gough School**

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## 1. Aims

Frederick Gough School promotes attendance to ensure learners are safe and as part of ongoing safeguarding. By attending school children have the opportunity to meet their educational outcomes, have supportive adults in their lives and are able to share any concerns they have with staff who have a genuine interest in their development.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent (less than 90%) and severe absence (less than 50%)
- Ensuring every child has access to the education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure children have the support in place to attend school

We promote and support punctuality in attending the school and all lessons.

## 2. 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 \(Learner Registration\) \(England\) 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.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The Governors

The Governors are 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

The link governor responsible for attendance is: Richard Harmer.

### 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 learners
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the local authority consider the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The designated senior leader is responsible for attendance

The designated senior leaders are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and regular reporting to the headteacher
- Working with the local authority through a multi-disciplinary approach to tackle all absence, including persistent and severe
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to request the consideration of issuing penalty notices from the local authority

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Karen Braithwaite and can be contacted via [kbraithwaite@frederickgoughschool.co.uk](mailto:kbraithwaite@frederickgoughschool.co.uk) or calling the school on 01724 292930.

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### 3.4 Class teachers/Assistant teachers

Class teachers are responsible for reporting attendance. They will do this by informing the attendance team of children's attendance through a register taken at the start of each lesson and during form time. Attendance is recorded six times a day with an official morning and afternoon mark being sent to the DfE

### 3.5 School Attendance team

The attendance team will:

- Record the child's attendance using the appropriate code
- Take calls, emails and text messages from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record appropriately

- Call the parents/carers of a child if they do not present themselves within the first session. (If the school has not already received advanced notification from parents/carers of the absence, the school will make contact with home to ascertain the reason for the absence. Attendance is electronically recorded in the school)
- Continuously monitor the attendance of students and co-ordinate intervention and support where necessary.

### 3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time and equipped to learn
- Text the school on 07943 109008 to report their child's absence before 8.30on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

### 3.7 Children

Children are expected to:

- Attend the school every day on time
- Attend all of their lessons
- Be punctual to school and each lesson

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

Frederick Gough School will keep an attendance register and place all children onto this register.

Frederick Gough school will take an official attendance register at the start of the first session (morning) of each school day and once during the second session (afternoon) in addition to taking class registers periods 2, 3, form and 5. It will mark whether every child 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.

Frederick Gough School will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (it is the headteachers decision to authorise an absence (not the parent))
- The nature of the activity if a child is attending an approved educational activity

#### ➤ The nature of circumstances where a child is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Frederick Gough School will keep every entry on the attendance register for at least 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Children must arrive in school by 8.40 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 and will be kept open for 30 minutes. The register for the second session will be taken in the afternoon.

Children arriving at other times of the day may be marked present if this is part of an agreed plan for example at the request of a medical practitioner.

### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The child'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 staff (see also section 7)

Parents/carers should report absence to the school (by text message) on 07943 109008 or [attendance@frederickgoughschool.co.uk](mailto:attendance@frederickgoughschool.co.uk)

The school 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 child's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The school 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.

### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the child's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents and carers should request leave of absence by texting the school on 07943 109008 or emailing [attendance@frederickgoughschool.co.uk](mailto:attendance@frederickgoughschool.co.uk)

However, parents/carers are encouraged and requested to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of education for the minimum amount of time necessary and should attend before and after the appointment.

The child'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.

### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A child who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as authorised late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as unauthorised late, using the appropriate code
- Children who are identified as being persistently late will have a meeting called with parents to discuss reasons for lateness and how this can be rectified. Persistent lateness may result in the issuing of a penalty notice where parents/carers will be subject to a monetary fine.

### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any child who is expected to attend the school but does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Text, e-mail or call the child's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the child's emergency contacts, the school will attempt a home visit to safeguard the child.
- 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 – this will be no later than five working days after the session
- Text, e-mail, or call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will utilise a multi-disciplinary approach and involve local authority partners in order to improve attendance for the child.

## 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at the review meetings held minimum termly and more often where necessary.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and evidence, and relevant context behind the request. Request for leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday is unlikely to be authorised.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request, the headteacher may 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 learner's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller children travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Romani people, 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 child is attending educational provision
- Study Leave
- Part time timetables and transitions – this should be in accordance with the agreed part time timetable and integration policy and only in very exceptional circumstances, time limited and regularly reviewed.
- EHCP requirements

### 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age

If issued with a fine, or 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 are issued by the local authority on behalf of schools/academies and 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 unauthorised holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an suspended/excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment remains unpaid after 28 days, the local authority will issue legal proceedings against parents/carers.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Staff at the school are committed to promoting and achieving good levels of attendance in accordance with the school attendance policy. Underpinning this commitment is a belief that only if children attend school regularly, can they take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

In addition to this, the school promotes an environment where children feel safe and valued.

All children arriving at school before 8.40 are greeted on their gate by their year team to ensure that they are met with a friendly face and that they know they have access to a known adult if they arrive with any issues requiring attention.

Year teams are on the gates from 8:15. Plenty of time to chat/resolve issues.

ILP meetings address attendance with students on the SEND register.

Individual incentives offered to students.

Home visits conducted by Attendance Team, Safeguarding Team and Pastoral Teams.

Form tutors reward weekly attendance via the Positive Behaviour System.

Attendance and punctuality report.

Children with 100% attendance each term achieve an attendance badge.

Letters are sent each term congratulating those students who have achieved 95% or above. All parents are sent termly letters highlighting their child's attendance including easy to understand data on number of sessions missed rather than % data.

Postcards are sent to students who improve their attendance.

Pupil Equity Advocates and Learning Co-ordinator Assistants regularly call absent children to identify barriers that may be preventing children from attending.

Uniform is provided if they don't have what they need, ensuring children know that they can still come to school without getting into trouble if they don't have their school shoes for example.

Assemblies are given that focus on how attendance and attainment are linked.

Yearly attendance is published around the school.

Letters include impact of previous student's attendance on attainment grades.

Form tutors and year teams are given weekly attendance data to help identify patterns, support children with their attendance and to challenge and support with absences.

Meetings with parents and children to identify and remove barriers.

Fortnightly ECM meetings used to discuss bespoke support for children with significant attendance difficulties.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

The school will:



- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual child level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of or individual children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Attendance is a standing item on the agenda at Senior Leadership Team meetings and children or groups of children who are cause for concern are discussed and a plan is put into action
- Monitoring takes place as part of a whole school priority and starts within the classroom itself
- The school will monitor itself against local, regional and national data regularly and take action to improve attendance where needed
- The school will regularly feedback to the governing body its attendance data and actions taken to ensure attendance remains a key focus and priority for the whole school

## 7.2 Analysing attendance

The School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify children or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these children 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 all teaching staff, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with children and families at the earliest opportunity
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

The School will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings and work alongside parents of children who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school and ensure children are accessing the education to which they are entitled
- Offer Early Help Support and other attendance support to support better school attendance
- 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 annually by Karen Braithwaite. At every review, the policy will be approved by the board of governors.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Learner has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Learner has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Learner has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a learner will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Learner is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Learner is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 learner is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Romani, Roma, and traveller absence	Learner from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Learner is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Learner 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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for learner's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Learner arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Learner 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 learner is in custody
Z	Learner not on admission register	Register set up but learner has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

