

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Document Summary

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**FYI: Version control should be used for all formal documents and managed as:-**

- ▶ **0.1 (1st draft version)**
- ▶ **0.2 (2nd draft and so on..... 0.3. 0.4 etc)**
- ▶ **1.0 (Once document has been approved)**
- ▶ **1.2 (during review/approval of a lifecycle document i.e. policies)**
- ▶ **2.0 (2nd approved document) and so on.**

## Amendment History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Amendment Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Amendment Summary</b>
1.0	071016	Mo Jones	Reformatting Only
1.1	011116	Rosie Brydon	Draft changes due to need to improve attendance figures.
1.2	011116	Rosie Brydon	Addition to draft changes following consultation with Dawn Kingscott
2.0	111116	Mo Jones	Reformatting for final version following FGB Approval

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**1. Rationale**

At Frampton Cotterell C of E Primary school we believe that full and regular attendance at school is a vital factor in achieving a successful education and we therefore do everything we can to promote it. For your child to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Personal discipline, including time keeping and regular attendance, has a direct impact on the attitude of children towards their work and the standards that they are able to attain. Parents are asked to work with the school to ensure that children grow up to value their educational opportunities.

**Aims**

By promoting, recording and monitoring attendance, we aim to:

- record the safe arrival of pupils in school
- enable action to be taken quickly where unexplained absence or regular lateness occurs. This is an essential part of our safeguarding procedures.
- prevent truancing and the exposure of pupils to unsafe situations
- ensure maximum educational input and promote high achievement
- ensure maximum social experience and promote social inclusion
- fulfil our legal requirements by ensuring that officers of the Local Authority are informed where necessary so that they can fulfil their statutory obligations.
- ensure that parents/carers understand their duties to see that their children are present at school, for the morning and afternoon sessions, on the days that the school is open for pupils except where circumstances are deemed to constitute an authorised absence.

**Legal Framework**

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, all children of compulsory school age must receive suitable education whether by regular school attendance or otherwise.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.

**Why regular attendance is so important.**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Research shows that good attendance is a crucial key to successful learning (see DfE publication "The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4" March 2016). To improve pupil attendance will without question improve their life chances.

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Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### **What is considered poor attendance and why?**

The government refers to attendance below 90% as persistent absenteeism. Last year, our poorest attenders were in school less than 90% of the time. Whilst 90% might seem relatively high (for example if someone gets 90% in an exam we think they've done well), if we look closely at this we see what this really means:

1. A child whose attendance is at 90% misses  $\frac{1}{2}$  day per week, 4 weeks (20 days of school) each year – almost equivalent to an entire term of schooling each and every year.

Think how much they miss in terms of the teacher explaining new work. Each absence puts them further and further behind and erodes their confidence as a learner.

2. If this attendance pattern continues through the time the child is at primary school, by the time they leave in Year Six they will have missed 7 months of school (140 days of school – equivalent to them missing from September to March of their education before the age of eleven.

Few children ever catch up; they are at a disadvantage for the rest of their school lives.

### **Promoting regular attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils, all members of school staff and governors.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Issue attendance data for every pupil in a certificate which is sent home at the end of every year,
- monitor all pupils' attendance; the Head teacher and School Administrator will meet each term to review attendance and draw up a list of pupils whose attendance requires further action.
- Maintain regular contact with EWO (Mrs Vicki Franklin) to report any concerns, and discuss how to follow up.
- Invite EWO to attend our EYFS parent evening in June to explain the importance of regular attendance to parents of pupils about to start school.
- Work closely with the EWO and Parent Support Advisor (Chris Cranney), to improve attendance
- Inform the governing body of attendance figures 3 times a year in the Headteacher's report, and report actions taken by the school to improve attendance.

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### Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. No holiday requests will be authorised unless for exceptional circumstances. The only absences that will be authorised are extenuating emergency circumstances at the Head teacher's discretion.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

If your child is unhappy about coming to school, the best thing to do is to let us know immediately that they are experiencing problems. We will do our very best to put support in place for you and your child.

Unauthorised absence can lead to a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority if the criteria is met. Please see South Glos penalty notice information on their website.

Any unauthorised absences of over 10 sessions (e.g. 5 days) in any 7 week period will result in a penalty notice being issued.

### Persistent absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their available schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need families' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this by email at the end of each term.

All PA cases are also automatically made known to the EWO in Term 6. A School Attendance meeting will be called and an Action Plan to reduce the PA will be drawn up. It will contain targets for the child and family to work on and it is expected that attendance will improve as a result. Failure to improve may result in a Penalty Notice; this is a fine imposed on you by the courts because your child is not attending school regularly.

### Medical Appointments

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We do ask that whenever possible, parents make medical appointments after school or during the holidays. We appreciate that this is not always possible, and would ask that if an appointment is necessary during the day that the school is notified, and that disruption to lessons is kept to a minimum by booking appointments around the midmorning or lunchtime break

### Travelling pupils

Children who cannot attend school because they have to travel with the family business can be marked as 'Travelling', as long as parents inform school when children are leaving and when they are expected to return. Children from "Traveller" families are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of requirement to attend school.

Children must also take distance learning packs with them and parents and children must agree to work from them. In order to be kept on roll and marked in the register as 'Travelling', a learning contract must be agreed and signed by parents, the school and pupil. The parents and school must also be in regular contact to ensure work is marked and appropriate new work set throughout the time the children are away from school.

### Absence procedures

If your child is absent you must: Contact us as soon as possible:

- by telephone (01454 867205) on the first day of absence by 9.30am; and every day after that until you can tell us the exact date of their return. Please be ready to inform the school of what is wrong with your child.
- by calling into school to report the child's absence to the reception staff.
- By e mailing the school at [office@fceperimary.co.uk](mailto:office@fceperimary.co.uk)

However you inform us, please make sure we know that the child is safe at home with you every day until their return. **Contacting us every day might seem over-fussy, BUT is really important for your child's safety. If a child goes missing on their way to school after an absence and the school has not been told to expect them back on that day, neither school nor you yourselves may realize your child is missing until many hours later at home time. Those few hours could be vital.**

If your child is absent we will:

- a) Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- b) Invite you in to discuss the situation with our EWO and Headteacher if absences persist.

### Telephone numbers and contact details

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed.

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### **Education Welfare Officer**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer. She will also try to resolve the situation by an agreed plan of action but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court may result.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child, causing them unnecessary anxiety and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness**

The school day starts at 8.55am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 9.05am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Head teacher and EWO to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Holidays in term time**

The Law changed in September 2013 re absence in Term time for the purpose of a family holiday. Absence for this reason can only be agreed by the Headteacher in advance and for exceptional reasons only. Cost and prior good attendance cannot be a factor in the decision process. We ask for parents support in this matter so children do not miss out on learning. Requests must be put in writing.

Any parent taking a child out of school for holiday without notifying the head teacher will receive an appointment to meet with the EWO to discuss the absence.

## **Penalty Notices**

Reducing absence from school is a key priority of the government and local authority because missing school may limit a pupil's attainment, disrupt school routines and the learning of others, and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

### **When might a Penalty Notice be issued?**

A Penalty Notice may be issued to a parent in one or more of the following circumstances where more than 10 sessions of unauthorised absence are recorded in 7 school weeks (ie 70 sessions). There are 2 sessions per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. A penalty notice may be issued where:

- an absence is due to unauthorised leave of absence over 10 sessions
- the child is persistently late arriving at school after registers have closed.
- a combination of more than 10 sessions are recorded over 7 school weeks and the school is not satisfied with the reason(s) resulting in unauthorised absence
  - when absent for holiday prior to statutory tests during the term when tests are taking place e.g. KS2 SATs , Y1 phonics.

### **School targets and initiatives**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The target level of attendance for this school has been agreed with the governing body as 96.8%.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletters and we ask for your full support.

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Policy reviewed: November 2016

Next review: November 2017

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**Appendix A - Procedures for Monitoring Absence**

