



"Let your light shine"

Frieth C.E.C. School Attendance Policy

Member of staff responsible: Headteacher
Governing body committee responsible: FGB
Reviewed: Annually
Headteacher's signature: Martin Gosling
Chair of Governor's signature: Jill Dean

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Frieth School Vision statement

'...Your light must shine before people, so that they see the good things you do.'
Matthew 5:16

Rationale:

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff are keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly and punctually so that they receive the best education possible. To this purpose, parents and carers will be informed of the school policy and encouraged to understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Purpose and General Information

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of high attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

The National Curriculum underlines the importance of continuity and progression in the learning process.

It is an established fact that children who develop poor attendance and punctuality at Primary school tend to continue in this pattern throughout their school life and beyond.

Poor attendance and punctuality can have detrimental effects on social development.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills.

Each year the Governing Body will examine the school's attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Buckinghamshire attendance targets.

The Governing Body will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that the school is achieving its set goals.

1. Authorising Absence

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded by the office administrator as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Absences will only be authorised for the following reasons except in 'exceptional' circumstances:

- Sickness. Where a child is too unwell to come to school (this may require a doctor's note for some pupils).
- On a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.
- Because no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the LA (this only applies to children who are eligible for transport to and from school provided by the LA).

2. Registration Times and Lateness

Lateness: Morning registration will take place at the start of school between 8.55 and 9:00 a.m. and afternoon registration will take place at 1.15 p.m. The registers will remain open until 9.10 a.m. Children arriving between 9:00am and 9:10 will be marked as Late. Pupils arriving after 9:10 will be marked as unauthorised absence.

Any child arriving after the close of registers will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation, e.g. school transport was delayed. In cases where the absence at registration was for an authorised reason (e.g. a medical appointment) the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered by the office administrator.

Children arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

3. Dealing with Absence

The school follows the following procedures for dealing with the absence of a child:

First Day of Absence

On a child's first day of absence parents are expected to contact the school. Any information collected will be transferred to the registers and a note made to the class teacher. If there has been no contact from the parent(s) then a phone call will be made.

Continuing Absence

If there has still been no contact from the parent(s) then a letter will be sent and further attempts will be made to contact the parent(s).

Ten Days Absence

If any pupil is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days, this will be notified to the LA by contacting the County Attendance Team. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

4. Children with Frequent Absence or Recurring Absence

It is the responsibility of the office administrator to be aware of and bring attention to the Headteacher any emerging attendance concerns. The Headteacher regularly monitors patterns in absence.

In cases where a child begins to develop a pattern of absences (and especially where attendance falls below 95%) the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent(s). **A letter is sent to parents/carers to raise awareness, encourage improvement and offer support.**

Under 90% Attendance: A phone call or meeting with parents/carers is arranged to:

- Offer support
- Explain the impact of poor attendance (negatively affects students' learning, leading to lower academic achievement and gaps in basic skills. It can also impact social development and weaken study habits)
- Clarify how many school days will be missed over the school year with current attendance (90% = approx. 4 weeks lost)

If this is unsuccessful the school will seek advice from the County Attendance Team (Formally Educational Welfare Officers Team)

Where a case is referred to the County Attendance Team, a child's attendance will be scrutinized closely. A failure to improve attendance may lead to:

- Requirement to attend an 'attendance panel' at which an agreement will be signed

- regarding school attendance and punctuality.
- Home visits to support good attendance.
- A requirement that all absences should be supported by a doctor's note.
- A penalty notice.
- Legal action against the parent by the Bucks CC enforcement team.

5. A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from a long absence all children are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the child is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that the other children have gained wherever possible.

6. Absence Notes

Should the absence be more than 1 day, parents are expected to provide a written note giving the reason for any absence from school.

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the child that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

If a note is not received from a parent regarding an absence, an email or letter will be sent home requesting the reason for the absence.

7. Planned or Foreseen Absence

For any foreseen or planned absence parents must seek permission at least one month before the absence using the Absence Form.

Where possible parents are encouraged to make medical appointments during school holidays or out of school hours.

The school will take into consideration the nature of the request as well as the criteria set out on the form, and attendance of the pupil in the previous year when deciding whether or not to authorise the absence.

8. Holidays Taken in Term Time

The school will not routinely grant permission for holidays or extended leave to be taken in term time and discourages parents from making an application for term time holidays except in "exceptional circumstances". ***In addition the Headteacher can determine the number of days the pupil(s) can be away from school.***

Application for any leave must be made at least 4 weeks before travel and should be made using the Absence Request Form.

The school will only consider leave of absence for one period of absence due to holiday leave within an academic year (regardless of the length of such absence).

The school will not grant permission for holidays to be taken in term time:

- During transition time when a pupil is settling into school.
- During preparation time for examination (e.g. SATs and 11+)
- During school and public examination periods.
- When the pupil's attendance is below 95% for the last year.
- When the pupil already has unauthorised absence.
- When the holiday is more than 10 school days.

- At the start of a term.

The Headteacher or person designated by the Headteacher may consider that the following circumstances are “exceptional”:

- To allow a pupil to return to their country of origin for family, religious or cultural reasons
- Unavoidable circumstances, e.g. the parent has inflexible leave allocation and this has been confirmed, in writing, by the employer.
- A family member is seriously ill.
- There has been a death or significant trauma in the family and a holiday may help the child to cope better with the situation.

The school does not consider the following to be “exceptional”:

- Availability of “cheap” holidays.
- Availability of desired accommodation, flights or other transport.
- The prospect of better weather.
- Additional days travel to or from family occasions that are in themselves “exceptional” circumstances.

Parent(s) may be required to attend an interview with the Headteacher to discuss their request for a term time holiday.

Parents/carers will normally be notified of the outcome of their application for a holiday in term time within 10 school days of the date of the application.

When a holiday in term time is agreed by the school, the absence will be recorded as ‘H’ on the school attendance register. This will mean that the absence has been recorded as authorised absence.

If the holiday in term time is not agreed by the school, but the pupil is absent on the requested dates, the absence will be recorded as ‘G’ (family holiday not agreed). This will mean that the absence has been recorded on the school attendance register as unauthorized and a penalty notice issued.

From August 19th 2024, under the new national penalty notice framework, all schools will be required to consider a penalty notice when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons.

This means from September 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.

If a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent/per child will be capped to two within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached a prosecution may be considered.

If parents are prosecuted and attend court because their child hasn’t been attending school, they could be fined up to £2,500.

9. Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parent(s) that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. This may be achieved through:

- Letters to parents
- The school’s website
- The school newsletter

- Information leaflets

The school will use opportunities to teach children to value high attendance at school. For example:

- **Weekly Attendance Cup awarded to the class with the highest attendance each week.**
- **Attendance Certificates presented to pupils to recognise and celebrate good attendance.**

9. The Registration System

The legal status of school registers is regularly stressed to all school staff and meticulous effort is made to ensure they are kept accurately. The school uses both a manual and a computerized system for keeping the school attendance record.

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

Computer registers are printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes.

The registers are safely stored in the school office which is locked overnight. They are collected from the office prior to each registration session and returned after the time at which the registers are 'closed'.

Appendix 1

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information:

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (a.m.)	Present
\	Present (p.m.)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (ie. Pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence

U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7, states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

- a) To his age, ability and aptitude and
- b) To any special needs he may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term ‘parent’ is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part VI Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping:

The legal requirements are found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

FRIETH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MONITORING

Attendance % report run from SIMS every Half Term and tracked on spreadsheet.

