Attendance Policy and Procedures
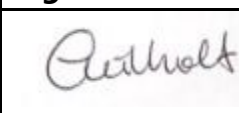
Policy Review

Review Cycle	Date of Current Policy	Author(s) of Current Policy	Review Date
Annually	January 2024	Kirsten Windsor	January 2025

Policy Ratification

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of Governors	Gayle Wilmott		17/01/2024
Principal	Emma Reynolds		17/01/2024

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1. Aims

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

- Promoting good attendance

- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Ensuring every student 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 students have the support in place to attend College

- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons

It is the aim of Frome College that students should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of students.

It is vital that students maintain regular attendance habits at Frome College. Therefore, the college will encourage parents of all students of compulsory College age, to send their children to College every day on time. If the student is unable to attend the College for any reason, the parent should inform the college of the reason on the first day of absence and every subsequent day of absence. If the College is concerned about a student's attendance for any reason, we will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance. We will do all we can to encourage our students to attend. We will also make the best provision we can for any student who needs additional support in College or who is prevented from attending College, due to a medical condition.

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards college. To this end, we strive to make our College a happy and rewarding experience for all students, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

2. Legislation and guidance

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

- Part 6 of <u>The Education Act 1996</u>
- Part 3 of <u>The Education Act 2002</u>
- Part 7 of <u>The Education and Inspections Act 2006</u>
- <u>The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)</u>
- <u>The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013</u>

It also refers to:

- <u>College census guidance</u>
- <u>Keeping Children Safe in Education</u>
- <u>Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for Colleges</u>

3. Roles and responsibilities

In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to students the importance of the education being provided

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of College attendance across the College's policies and ethos
- Making sure College leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole College
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

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

3.3 The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the College
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Having an oversight of data analysis

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues

- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Vice Principal and can be contacted via 01373 465353 and/or office@fromecollege.org

3.4 The attendance lead

The College attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to College staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Principal

- Working with education welfare officers to tackle severe and persistent absence

- Co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence (this may include liaison with the DSL and Safeguarding Team) and advises the Principal as requested

- Advising the Principal and Vice Principal (authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer can be contacted via 01373 469008 or fcc.attendance@fromecollege.org

3.5 Class teachers/form tutors / Heads of House

- Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the College attendance office.

- Heads of House are responsible for following up unexplained absences and action plans for students with low attendance; timely liaison with families and referral to outside agencies.

- Form tutors are responsible for supporting students with attendance as directed by the Head of House.

3.6 College attendance staff

College attendance staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the College system

- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Attendance Lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

- Input attendance from any manual registers

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every [day/timetabled session] on time

- Call the College to report their child's absence before 8:45am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

- Provide the College with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the College day

3.8 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each College day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student 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 student is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances where a student 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.

Students must arrive in College by 8:40am on each College day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:15am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 12:45pm

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the College of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the College attendance team (see also section 7).

On the first and every day of unexplained absence, where the parent/carer has not made contact with the College, to inform of the reason for absence, our Attendance Team will make contact with the parent/carer

(person with parental responsibility) informing of absence by email sent via 'Collegecomms'. (College to home communication). We would seek to prioritise students who are, or we consider to be vulnerable including; Looked After Children, students subject to Child Protection Plans, students open to Children's Social Care as a Child in Need, students who have previously been reported missing, or for any other reason the College consider vulnerable. These Students are monitored throughout the day and the Parent / Carer contacted by phone if they are marked absent from any lessons.

Parents will be asked to supply details of at least two people who can be contacted in an emergency, and these details will be reviewed on an annual basis at the beginning of the academic year, via reminders on the 'FROG' platform (parental portal) where details can be checked and updated. Reminders are sent via Social Media and the Principal's letter.

If the College is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the student, we may raise this as a concern with our Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the College by the parent may not be authorised.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the College has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-College

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the College may ask for 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 a student needs to be sent home due to illness, the student should be collected from the college main reception by a parent or another authorised adult, after being signed out by the Attendance Team and visiting First Aid. No student will be allowed to leave the College site without parental confirmation.

If the College 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

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the College in advance of the appointment.

Parents should complete a Term Time Leave Request form available on the college website
https://www.fromecollege.org/assets/Letters-Home/Leave-of-absence-in-term-time-form-2022-23-05.08.22-JDJ.pdf

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

The student'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 College can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

> A student who arrives late, before the register has closed, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L) which counts as present.

- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)

- Our students must arrive by 8:40 am on each college day.

- Our morning register is taken at 8:45 am and will be kept open until 9:15am. Our afternoon register is taken at 12:45 pm

- A weekly report is sent to the Pastoral Lead detailing any students who have been late to College 2 or more times in any week, and they will be asked to attend a catch-up detention during a lunchtime. If the detention is not attended, further sanctions are arranged.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

On the first and every day of unexplained absence, where the parent/carer has not made contact with the College, our Attendance Officer will make contact with the parent/carer (person with parental responsibility) informing of absence. We would seek to prioritise students who are, or we consider to be vulnerable including; Looked After Children, students subject to Child Protection Plans, students open to Children's Social Care as a Child in Need, students who have previously been reported missing, or for any other reason the College consider vulnerable.

Parents will be asked to supply details of at least two people who can be contacted in an emergency, and these details will be reviewed on an annual basis through parents' evenings/newsletter reminders etc.

If the College is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the student, we may raise this as a concern with our Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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

- Call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the College cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts,

- 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 5 working days after the session

- 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 College will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The College will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels for example via reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

The College 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 one month before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the College website. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental 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 student's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the College will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller students 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 College, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

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

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers 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 a Principal, 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 student is found in a public place during College hours without a justifiable reason

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

At Frome College we use a range of strategies to incentivise excellent attendance. This involves staff at all levels. Strategies are bespoke but also can be targeted at individual groups and the whole College. For example; individualised conversations, competitions, vouchers and coaching conversations, and celebrating good attendance in assemblies.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The College will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the College and at an individual student level

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

Student-level absence data will be collected each week and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's College absence national statistics releases. The underlying College-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The College will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The College will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students 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 College will
- Provide regular attendance reports on the Shared Drive, to facilitate discussions with students 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

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

The College will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of students who the College (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at College
- 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 the Governing Body. 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 College attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	College has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the College
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the College
N	Reason not provided	Student 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	College is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at College after the register closed

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