



‘Being different, Belonging together’

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

<u>Policy Information</u>			
<b>Status:</b>	Statutory	<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Full Governors
<b>Cycle of Review:</b>	Annual	<b>Policy Ratified:</b>	February 2018
<b>Signed as accepted:</b>			

### **Purpose of this Policy**

Good attendance at school is essential for children to enjoy learning, experience success, develop confidence and enable them to become lifelong learners who are prepared for life in the modern world. Learning early that attendance is the key to success enables them to access the broader curriculum, develop ownership of their learning and create a sense of aspiration for what life has to offer. *The greater the attendance, the greater the achievement.*

### **What does the law say?**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have by regular attendance at school.

You should know that:

- All absence figures have to be reported to the Local Authority, Department for Education and the Governing Body.
- It is the responsibility of the parents, guardians or carers to be fully aware of the school’s Attendance Policy.
- It is the responsibility of the parents, guardians or carers to manage their child’s attendance in line with this policy.
- It is the responsibility of the parents, guardians or carers to inform the school of absence/lateness by 9.30am no later.
- Absence can have a huge impact on the confidence, self-esteem and friendship groups for child that can have long-term consequences.
- Everyone wants the best for their child, so why would you not support your child by ensuring that they are in School for the full entitlement of 190 days per year.
- This policy adheres to the Fixed Penalty Notices Code of Conduct (January 2014)

### **Rationale**

At Frances Olive Anderson Church of England Primary School, we aim for high standards in all we do.

The School is committed to providing a carefully planned education for all students. We believe that regular school attendance is vitally important in helping all students benefit fully from this education. Accordingly, we will strive to ensure that all students achieve maximum possible attendance, and that any problems which may hinder full attendance are acted upon swiftly.

In pursuit of these goals it is acknowledged that:

- in the first instance, it is the duty of parents/carers to ensure that their child receives a suitable full-time education, and to ensure attendance at school, as required by law.



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- situations may exist which require students and/or their parents/carers to be supported and rewarded either by the school, and/or external agencies, to meet their attendance obligations and responsibilities.

### **Home-School Links**

In view of the above, good relationships between home and school are considered to be essential.

We expect parents/carers to ensure that students attend school regularly in accordance with the most recent DFE requirements which also encourages parents/carers to avoid term time holidays whenever possible. We also expect students to be punctual and appropriately prepared for the day. It is essential that contact with the school is made, as soon as is reasonably practical, whenever a student is unable to attend, or where there are problems of a confidential nature which may result in the student being kept away from school.

Parents/carers and students can expect the school to record daily, the punctuality and attendance of all students. The school will make early contact with home if a student fails to attend school without any reason being received by the school. Any problem notified to school will receive prompt and confidential action.

### **Encouraging good attendance**

We encourage good attendance through communication between school and parents/carers. Parents/carers are always encouraged to attend Parents' Consultation Evenings. In addition, attendance checks and awarding Certificates for 100% attendance achieved throughout the year are further examples of ways in which the school encourages good attendance.

### **Responding to non-attendance**

When a student does not attend school, we will respond promptly. That is to say:

- the school will operate a first day absence contact process. If a student has been marked as 'N' and no message has been received by the school office by 9.30am, where possible the parent/carer will be contacted to seek an explanation. If this is forthcoming, the office will code the absence and record the reason for absence in the notes section
- If a student arrives at school thirty minutes after the registers have closed then they will be marked as "U" which means unauthorised absence for that session.
- on a student's return from absence where no authorisation has been received, school will continue to seek a reason. A letter will be sent home for clarification.
- if attendance falls below 95% (by the start of the spring term) a letter will be sent.
- if the student has a history of poor attendance (i.e. less than 90% for the last academic year) and falls below 95% during the first term then a letter will be sent home.
- if attendance falls between 90 and 95% parents/carers will be invited to an informal meeting to discuss the reasons for the absence and how school can support.
- if attendance falls below 90% then the parents may be asked to attend a be invited in to a panel meeting with the head teacher and business manager to discuss concerns, if the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for absence, and an action plan will be drawn up.
- if the Head teacher or Deputy Head teacher are not satisfied with the reasons given for absence(s) then the school will refuse to authorise the absence(s) unless medical evidence is produced by a parent;
- if attendance falls below 90% for a six week period (weeks can be positioned either side of a holiday) and is unauthorised, both parents/carers may be issued with a fixed penalty notice. If a parent/carer pays the penalty notice within 21 days from the date it is served the sum due from the parent/carer to



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discharge the penalty notice is £60.00. The parent/carer can still pay the notice after 21 days but the payment increases to £120 and this must be paid before 28 days have passed from the date of service.

- if there are no improvements, then the case will be discussed again with the EWO with a view to a formal referral being made to the Educational Welfare Service, prior to possible further legal proceedings on behalf of the local authority. Prosecution of offences is a matter within the discretion of the local authority and a decision will be taken in line with the local authority prosecution policy for these matters and proceedings, where commenced, will be issued by the local authority;
- If a prosecution is brought and the parent/carer is found guilty or pleads guilty then a conviction for an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 or for an offence under Section 103 of the Education and inspection Act 2006 both carry a fine of up to a maximum of £1000 and in addition the local authority will seek to recover costs in respect of bringing the proceedings. Further, a successful prosecution will result in a parent having a criminal record which could be disclosed should they apply for a position where a DBS check is required.
- When the student returns, a reintegration programme will be established, e.g. a Pastoral Support Programme, tailored to the individual student's needs and managed by the class teacher, head teacher with support from the SENDCO if necessary. Liaison with, and support from, the appropriate staff, the student, parents/carers and other agencies will be established if required.

### **Liaising with other agencies**

Pupils with poor attendance may be the subject of Early Help Assessment support. Other agencies may be involved in order to support pupils and families.

Good relations and working practices are essential. The school will work in partnership with other agencies where appropriate e.g. Behavioural and Support Services, Educational Psychologists, Social Services.

### **Organisation**

It is important that **every** member of staff conveys to the pupils the importance of maximum possible attendance, whilst being mindful of the age of the pupil. All members of staff have the responsibility to report concerns regarding attendance to the head teacher or in her absence the deputy head teacher.

The 'Attendance Policy' will be reviewed annually.



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**Appendix 1**

**Leave of Absence Request**

**APPLICATION FOR STUDENT'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

It is expected that family holidays are normally taken during the official 13 weeks of school holidays (term dates are available from the school a year in advance). With effect from September 2013 the Regulations have changed and the school is now prevented from granting any leave of absence except in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays, re-unions, special birthdays and other family events are not considered exceptional and so we will not be able to grant leave of absence for such events.

Pupil Name		Year	
Leave Requested	From -- / / - To / / - --	School Days to Be Missed	

**Reason for requesting an absence in term time (please complete the relevant section):**

**1. This is an annual holiday on dates fixed by my employer**

*Please give name and contact details for employer*

**2. Leave of absence requested on compassionate/medical grounds/Other Reason**

*Please provide details*

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ *Parent/Guardian*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**On completion please pass to Office for processing.**

<b>Office: Attendance %</b>	
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*Head teacher's Response*

Copies to: Head teacher → School Office → Original to Parent/Guardian



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**Appendix 2**

**Attendance and Punctuality Contract**

We recognise the good work that our families do to get their children to school on time, every day. Children get certificates and rewards and parents are informed through general newsletters and personal letters in the post.

However, as a result of circumstances beyond their control, it would be impossible for some children to achieve 100% attendance throughout their school life.

In the main, these circumstances relate to acute, diagnosed medical conditions. This contract will support the child to get recognition of good attendance and prevent inappropriate investigation or communication. We ask parents to sign this agreement and adhere to it.

Name of child: .....

Medical condition: .....

Doctor/clinic involved: .....

As the parent/carer of: ..... I will:

- Make every effort to make appointments out of school times and if not attend school before or after these appointments;
- Let school know of appointments and hospital stays well in advance;
- Provide medical documentation of these appointments, etc.;
- Sign the appropriate forms to allow school professionals to medicate in school time;
- Ensure that medical professionals contact school with information / communication, especially hospital school;
- Attend hospital school or ask school for a work pack to be sent home for an absence longer three days is anticipated;
- Negotiate with school a part time timetable should a full day of school be inappropriate;
- Continue to send my child to school on time, every day for the rest of their school time.

Signed..... Date.....

The school will:

- Complete registers with the appropriate codes:
  - **M** medical appointment
  - **I**llness
  - **B** educated off site (if at hospital school)
  - **C** other authorised circumstances
- Analyse data with this information in mind, when calculating percentage attendance and organising rewards, letters, etc.
- Inform the school nurse of this contract and offer further support for you and your child;
- Arrange work packs for children to complete whilst absent due to their medical condition.

Signed..... Date.....

The child will:

- Come to school every day, on time;
- Complete work set by school or at the hospital school;
- Be aware of their medical conditions and tell school adults their needs.

Signed..... Date.....



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### Appendix 3

#### Letters to be put on headed paper

##### Letter 1

Parental Addressee

Address 1

Address 2

Address 3

Address 4

Dear

**Attendance:** Name of pupil:

At Frances Olive Anderson C of E Primary School we believe that regular school attendance is vitally important in helping all pupils benefit fully from their education. Accordingly we will strive to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems which may hinder full attendance are acted upon fully and swiftly.

According to our records, since the start of the new school year in September, your child has a record of actual attendance at school of:..... %. Last year, our records indicate that your child had an attendance at school of.....%.

There may be reasons for the number of absences and you may have already contacted the school. However we consider it to be reasonable and responsible that we keep you informed of the situation and that it is being monitored.

Finally, you need to be aware that we may investigate situations where the attendance of a pupil, over time, falls below 90% without the school being aware of any ongoing problems or issues. The government considers attendance less than 95% to be below average and this is reason why you have received this letter.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter please contact myself.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sarah Woolley  
(Head teacher)



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## Letter 2

Parental Addressee  
Address 1  
Address 2  
Address 3  
Address 4

Dear

### Attendance

Name of pupil:

At Frances Olive Anderson Church of England Primary School we believe that regular school attendance is vitally important in helping all pupils benefit fully from their education. Accordingly we will strive to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems which may hinder full attendance are acted upon fully and swiftly.

As can be seen below, national data provided by the Department for Education demonstrates a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of attainment

#### Percentage of Pupils who achieve five A\* to C GCSEs (including Maths & English) in relation to time missed from school:

- 50% of school missed, only 3% of pupils achieve the above standard.
- Between 10 and 20% of school missed, only 35% achieve the above standard.

According to our records, since the start of the new school year in September, [student name] has an actual attendance at school of: [X]%.

There may be reasons for the number of absences and you may have already contacted the school. However we consider it to be reasonable and responsible to invite you to a panel meeting on:

- 
- 

to discuss what actions we should take in order to support you in ensuring >>>>>> attends school more regularly.

As parents and teachers we have a duty to keep communication lines open in order to maximise the attendance of the children in our care. Discussions with other agencies such as medical staff and the county legal team may be required to support our objective of maximising attendance particularly where attendance, over time, falls below 90%.

If you wish to discuss the content of this letter, please contact myself

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sarah Woolley  
(Head teacher)



FRANCES OLIVE ANDERSON  
Church of England (Aided) School



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**Letter 3**

Date:

Parental Addressee

Address 1

Address 2

Address 3

Address 4

Address 5

Dear

At Frances Olive Anderson Church of England Primary School we believe that regular school attendance is vitally important in helping all pupils benefit fully from their education. Accordingly we will strive to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems which may hinder full attendance are acted upon fully and swiftly.

Due to [Name]'s poor attendance in the previous academic year and a further absence on the [date], we will no longer be able to authorise further absences or lateness without first receiving medical evidence for the absence from a medical professional.

Please contact myself if you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sarah Woolley  
(Head teacher)

Further letters following this will be bespoke to the individual cases



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## Appendix 4

### GUIDANCE FOR CLASS TEACHERS

#### Good Practice

Under Section 7 of the Education act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents to see that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities...

#### The Importance of Registration:

- A class attendance register will be kept on which, at the **BEGINNING** of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. Registers should be collected from and returned to the school office, within 10 minutes of the start of session.
- Manuscript registers must be kept in ink and corrections must be made in such a way that the original entry and correction are both clearly distinguishable.
- Authorised absences should be entered with the symbol for categorising the absence.
- **Only the school**, in the context of the law **can approve absence**, not parents. If a class teacher does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason, then the matter must be referred to the Headteacher.
- Emerging patterns of authorised absence will be reported to the Bursar, who then discusses with the Headteacher.
- Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code.

#### Authorised or Unauthorised Absence:

**Authorised absence** is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absences must be regarded as **unauthorised**.

The following are acceptable reasons for authorising absences.

Illness.

- Family bereavements – (time limited).
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion until removed from school or re-instated.
- **Family Holidays:** Parents should not take pupils on holiday during school term though schools are able to exercise the discretion in very exceptional circumstances.

The following are classed as present for statistical information and must be code marked.

- Field trips and educational visits both in this country and overseas.
- Pupils receiving approved education off site e.g. those receiving specialist support or those in receipt of home tuition but remaining on the roll of the school.



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Absences will not be authorised under the following circumstances.

- Shopping trips.
- Minding the house or looking after siblings
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified.
- No reason given.
- School staff feel the note is not genuine or valid.

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. It is for the Headteacher to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered. Further advice is available on the DfE website.

**Lateness:**

- Schools should actively discourage late arrival by challenging parents of children who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation.
- Where a pupil arrives after register closure without good reason, they should be marked with an unauthorised absence and the letter L in blue or black to indicate that they are on site.
- It is the responsibility of both parents and pupils to ensure that pupils arrive in school before the bell at 8.55am. The school gates are open at 8.45am to encourage this.