

School Logo

Each policy has to be personalised very slightly with correct times of day



FRAYS

Academy Trust

Frays Academy Trust Attendance Policy

Date Ratified: December 2017

APPROVED

Version History

Version	Date	Status and Purpose	Author	Changes Overview
1	December 2017	Policy Update	Heads of Schools	Updated to reflect new guidance

Approval

Signed by Chair of Directors	
Date of Approval/Adoption	December 2017
Date of Review	December 2018

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

In the schools in the LDBS Frays Academy Trust (the Trust) we aim to create a caring, secure and stimulating environment in which all children are enabled to develop intellectually, spiritually, socially, morally and physically to gain an understanding of the diverse cultural society in which they live.

Our schools work closely with the Participation Team to support in enforcing the legal framework as defined in The Education Act 1996 and the Children's Act 1989.

Attendance at school is clearly an important pre-requisite for a successful and fulfilling school career. Prolonged absence, irregular attendance and lack of punctuality can all serve to undermine educational achievement and result in considerable long-term disadvantage to children and young people. Equally, the school places importance on punctuality. Lateness can have a detrimental effect on a child's learning. The DFE expect children to attend at least 95% of the time.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REGISTRATION

We are legally obliged to keep accurate, up-to-date registers. This must record pupils absent or present at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session and are entered into SIMS Attendance registers. Attendance registers must show whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. All codes used are in line with the Local Authority. (*see appendix*)

Registers are legal documentation and may be used as evidence in cases where parents are being prosecuted for school attendance offences.

The register is also a vital checklist in the event of an emergency.

A SUMMARY OF PRACTICE OUR SCHOOLS

Registers are kept for 5 years after the date in which they were last used.

The Head of School will ensure that there is consistency of registration practice within the school.

We expect regular attendance at school from all families and actively discourage lateness. Attendance and lateness are monitored by the Attendance Officer and if there are any concerns they will notify the Head of School. The Head of School will speak to parents if there are emerging patterns of absence which may disrupt continuity of learning for the child, even if these absences are authorised (*see monitoring attendance*).

In promoting regular attendance we aim to work closely with Participation Officers from Hillingdon.

THE SCHOOL HAVE A DUTY TO:

- To provide education appropriate to all pupils
- To promote good attendance for all pupils
- To keep accurate and up to date records on children's attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with the Participation Officer regarding concerns over children's attendance.

THE GOVERNORS HAVE A DUTY TO:

- Ensure there is a clear policy and guidance is applied fairly
- Set attendance targets
- Monitor attendance data

PARENTS HAVE A DUTY TO:

- Send their children to school regularly. (The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents do this and will work with the school to monitor attendance.)
- Inform the school of the reason for the child's absence. This should be done on the first day of absence by telephone call and with a written note when the child returns to school.
- To provide an appointment card for any necessary medical appointments that has had to be made during the hours of the school day.
- To work in partnership with the school to ensure that every child has the opportunity to meet their full potential, ie to ensure social and emotional needs of the child are met and to ensure a positive attitude to learning.
- To collect their children on time at the end of the school day

MONITORING ATTENDANCE (timings will vary for each school in the Trust)

School Starts at 8.45 am and registration occurs promptly. Registers are taken and returned to the School Office at 8.55 am.

A child arriving after 8.55 am will be considered to be late. The child will be 'late- present' if arrival is before 9.15 am, but after am, the child will be recorded as 'late – unauthorised absent'. In the afternoon, the registers are taken by 1.20 pm (lunch finishes at 1.15 pm).

The Head of School monitors closely the attendance of pupils to look for patterns in absence and to tackle persistent children who are constantly having time out of school. A number of different methods are used to combat high absence:

'First Day Absence' is been used to contact all children who have not notified the school of why children are not in school that day. This is activated after 9.15 am, by the Clerical Assistant. Parents are obliged to return the call and will be phoned every hour until a call is returned.

Where a child is beginning to show signs of poor attendance, the Learning Mentors meet with Parents to provide support and guidance as to how they may try to improve the regularity of Attendance. This may take the form of:

- Meeting with parents regularly to provide support prior to any formal approach being necessary
- Putting sticker charts in place to support parents in getting their children to school (and on time)
- Providing child with mentoring sessions as necessary.

The Head of School sends Half-termly letters out to the parents of children who had missed more than 10 sessions (5 days) during a half-term. These absences may have been authorised / unauthorised.

The Head of School meets with the Participation Officer on a regular basis (as defined in the Service Level Agreement) to monitor data, discuss individual concerns and where necessary, agree on further appropriate action

Where attendance continues to be a concern as improvements are not made, a three tiered approach has been used:

- a warning letter will be sent to parents explaining that as attendance is low their child is to be monitored closely until a particular time frame and may need to attend a meeting with the Participation Officer if no improvement is seen.
- Parents asked to attend a formal meeting with the Head of School and/or Participation Officer. At this meeting, the attendance of pupils would be discussed and parents are warned that if improvement is not seen then an Attendance Panel would be put in place.
- Attendance Panels – the Schools in the Frays academy Trust and the Local Authority follow the DfE guidelines for Attendance Panels and penalty notices are issued for parents of children who have continuing poor attendance. If these are not paid, a summons to the magistrates court is issued. Penalty notices can be issued per parent and per child. If parents have been issued with Penalty Notices previously, then they may be summonsed directly to Court for further offences.
- (In the event of an extremely high level of absence, steps 1 and 2 may be missed out.)

Pupils attendance percentage and data on punctuality, (from September to June in an academic year), is also communicated to parents as part of the Pupils' School Report. This is accompanied by a letter from the Head of School reinforcing the effects of poor attendance.

REQUEST for EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE

The DfE States that Schools are not obliged to agree to holidays, or other days of absence in term time. It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable. Poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school and employment and therefore need to be discouraged.

As a school, we have adopted the guidelines from the Borough, which means we will not authorise any Exceptional Leave.

In our schools, we recognise that there may be very exceptional circumstances which can be considered by the Head of School for leave of absence during the school term. Such cases remain in the personal gift of the Head of School to authorise (max. 10 days only). Statutory Regulations demand that parents make this request in writing to the Head of School. It must contain reasons for the request why it is exceptional and the dates, including the return date. Each request will be considered individually and will be at the Head of School's discretion. Various factors will be taken into account such as:

- The child's attendance history
- Exceptional leave will always be refused when a student's absence is less than 95%
- Exceptional leave will always be refused when school is aware of any truancy

- Exceptional leave will always be refused in Years 2 and 6
- Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual holiday request) or when patterns become identifiable

Where very Exceptional Leave may be granted, it will be where:

- Efforts made to link this to a school holiday
- Efforts made to minimise the number of school days taken
- There is avoidance of important school events eg, SATs examinations
- It may be for a Religious reason, such as a funeral or religious festival

Where Exceptional leave is taken which has not been authorised by the Head of School, the parents / Carers, through the Local Authority Participation Team, could incur a penalty notice of £60, £120 or a summons from the magistrate's court.

Reasons for Exceptional leave is logged on the student's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process. Penalty notices can be issued per parent and per child. If parents have been issued with Penalty Notices previously, then they may be summonsed directly to Court for further offences.

If children do not return by the agreed date, (contained in the request for exceptional leave and the Head of School's authorisation), then following a further 10 day period, the child can be removed from the school roll and referred to the school's Participation Officer. Where there are extenuating circumstances, which prevent return on the planned date, it is essential that parents make every effort to contact the school and explain the reason for the continued absence.

Where children are out of school for three days or more and the school may / may not have been notified of the reason, the school will verify that the child is genuinely ill by the following means:

- Phonecalls to the home address
- Phone calls to the parent / carers work
- Door knock on the family home.

If none of these are successful, parents / carers could be issued a fine by the Local Authority Participation Service as it will be assumed that the family is on holiday. It will then be the parents' responsibility to prove otherwise.

OTHER UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (Participation Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- excessive illness without medical evidence

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more 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 parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. All Persistent Absenteeism cases are also automatically referred to the Participation Officer.

PUNCTUALITY (timings will vary for each school in the Trust)

Pupils are expected to arrive in school on time for the start of the school day – 8.45 am. If a child arrives after 8.55 am, they will have missed registration. In this instance, parents and children are expected to sign in at the office, giving a reason for the lateness. Repeated lateness is reported to the Head of School for monitoring. Parents / Carers of pupils who are consistently late are discussed by the Head of School and the Participation Officer in their regular monitoring meetings.

REINFORCEMENT OF GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY (these will vary for each school in the Trust)

The school positively reinforces good attendance and punctuality by:

- Awarding certificates weekly in Church Worship, to the two classes that have the highest percentage attendance from the previous week.
- Awarding certificates weekly in Church Worship, to any classes that had all children arrive at school on time during the previous week.
- Prize given to the class that receives the weekly attendance certificate the most during the year.
- Awarding individual certificates termly to pupils who have not had any absence: Bronze for 1 term, Silver for two terms and Gold if a child does not have any time off during the academic year.
- The school deals with bullying immediately and firmly (see anti bullying policy)
- Prize draw for children with 100% attendance.
- Providing Learning Mentor support for those children who are experiencing difficulties with coming to school
- Providing a breakfast club to encourage children to arrive early, start the day in a calm fashion and offer a healthy breakfast.

SUMMARY

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures & its Attendance Policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. 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. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment. It is also a fundamental part of the Every Child Matters intentions to:

- Being Healthy Being Safe
- Enjoying & Achieving
- Making a positive contribution Achieving economic well-being

This policy has been agreed with the Governing Body. This policy will be reviewed annually.

APPENDIX 1

COMPLETING THE REGISTERS

Registers close at 8.55am/1.20pm and after these times a child is considered to be late.

If a child arrives late but before 9.15am then they are considered to be late but present at school and so only a 'L' is written. However, if a child arrives after 9.15am then they are considered as late and absent so a 'U' is written. When a child is absent staff must note the reason for absence as a comment. This helps us to monitor patterns of absence.

Registers are a legal document.

PRESENT CODES

/\ - attendance

L - late but before 9.15 am

V - **SCHOOL TRIPS - Whenever a school day trip is organised, the register must be taken before leaving school. For the afternoon session, the children are considered to be present, and this is marked in the register as a red 'V'.**

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

It is not always known at the time when the register is marked whether absence is authorised or not. Therefore a 'N' should be marked for the child being absent which can then be filled in later when/if the absence is authorised.

Parents cannot authorise absence - only the school can do this.

Absence codes:

H – Authorised holiday with permission granted by the Head of School

U - Unauthorised Late – after 9.15 am (these will vary for each school in the Trust) O - unauthorised – reason not acceptable or not given after repeated asking

I – Authorised absence through illness, where a phone call, or letter has been received M- Doctors/dentist/hospital appointments, normally only half a day

C - Authorised absence for family reasons- e.g. bereavement, wedding of close family Please check with the Head of School before using this code.

R - Religious Observance

E - Exclusion

Absence cannot be authorised for shopping, looking after brothers and sisters etc.

Please notify the Head of School if you have any concerns regarding any attendance or punctuality matters.

For further information regarding any aspect of attendance please refer to the Head of School.