



# FRAYS

*Academy Trust*

## **St. Martin's CE Primary School Attendance Policy**

**Date Ratified: May 2023  
Review Date: May 2026**

## Approval

<b>Signed by Chair of Directors</b>	
<b>Date of Approval/Adoption</b>	May 2023
<b>Date of Review</b>	<b>May 2026</b>

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This policy will be subject to ongoing review and may be amended prior to the scheduled date of the next review in order to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or best practice (where appropriate).

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## 1 Scope

Frays Academy Trust aims to create a caring, secure and stimulating environment in which all children are enabled to develop intellectually, spiritually, socially, morally, mentally and physically to gain an understanding of the diverse cultural society in which they live.

Pupils need to attend school regularly and punctually if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Our policy applies to all children registered at our schools and this policy is made available to all parents/carers via our school websites and the trust website.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, our schools work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are designed to ensure this happens. **We regard 96% attendance as the expected level.** Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Each of our schools is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children 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. This policy sets out how we will achieve this together.

## 2 Aims

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

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil 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 pupils have the support in place to attend school

## 3 Legislation and guidance

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

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold and DfE guidance on [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance](#).

## **4 Roles and responsibilities**

### **4.1 Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors will approve the Frays Academy Trust Attendance Policy. The Board will keep an overview of attendance across the Trust and set attendance targets for each school.

### **4.2 Local Governing Body**

The Local Governing Body is responsible for:

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

### **4.3 Headteacher**

The headteacher, as the designated senior leader for attendance is responsible for:

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

The headteacher in conjunction with the SENDCo will act as the designated senior leaders responsible for attendance, who is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- 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
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

### **4.4 Attendance officer**

The school 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 school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/[role] (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Dingwall and she can be contacted via [smartins@fraysacademytrust.org](mailto:smartins@fraysacademytrust.org) or the school office: 01895 462350

### **4.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

#### **4.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

#### **4.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before [time] on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

#### **4.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day on time.

### **5 Recording attendance**

#### **5.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil 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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:50 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:55am and will be kept open until 09:25. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:15 and will be kept open until 13:30.

#### **5.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:45 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office or contacting the office staff via Class dojo. The office can also be contacted using the email address: [attendancematters@fraysacademytrust.org](mailto:attendancematters@fraysacademytrust.org)

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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 the school 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.

### **5.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents can notify the school of such appointments in person, by telephone, by emailing the school email address or via Parent Pay.

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

The pupil'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 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### **5.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If your child has a persistent late record we will meet with you, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

When a child is not collected after school we will make every effort to contact parents. In the case that parents are not contactable, we will contact other named people on the child's profile to arrange for the child to be collected. All lateness will be recorded on SIMS.

### **5.5 Following up unexplained absence**

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. We will attempt to contact parents via telephone, text message, email and Parent Mail. If the school cannot reach parents, or any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will conduct a home visit to check on the family's welfare. If we are still unable to make contact, then the school may take other measures, for example contacting the police
- 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 school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

## **5.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

We will talk to you about your child's attendance during parent consultation meetings.



## 6 Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 6.1 Approval for term-time absence

At schools in Frays, we do not, as rule, grant a term time leave of absence unless there are exceptional and unavoidable reasons. The principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

The school will consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. A leave of absence request form is available as an Appendix to this policy or from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (both physical or mental health related) and medical/dental appointments (see section 5 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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 school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

### 6.2 Legal sanctions

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

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent 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 headteacher, 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 pupil is found in a public place during school 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.

## 7 Children missing from education

When a pupil is expected to join the school either at a normal time of starting (e.g. nursery or reception) or at any time and s/he does not arrive, the school will firstly try to make contact with the parents by phone or letter. If after one week no contact has been made the school will contact the

local authority to find out whether the child had been registered elsewhere. After two weeks (10 school days) the school will complete a referral to the local authority who will follow the procedures for 'missing pupils'.

The pupil will not be removed from roll until the Local Authority has ascertained the pupil's whereabouts and safety and has confirmed that the pupil is registered at another school, is being educated otherwise or at the very minimum has made reasonable enquiries as to the missing child's whereabouts and been unable to trace them.

Parents leaving the country will be asked to provide evidence of flights, contact details, an address at which they can be contacted and details of the next school that their child will be attending.

If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or fails to return from a holiday the school will follow the normal procedures for investigating pupil absence (i.e. telephone calls, letters, invitations to meetings at the school etc). If the child does not return to school the matter will be referred to the local authority within two weeks and they will follow the procedures for 'missing pupils'. The pupil will not be removed from roll until the local authority has ascertained the pupil's whereabouts and safety or has made reasonable enquiries to this end.

If a pupil 'disappears' without any warning this will prompt a safeguarding concern; a referral will be made directly to children's services and possibly a referral to the police to request a welfare check.

## **8 Strategies for promoting attendance**

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

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.

### **8.1 Promoting attendance**

To help us all to focus on promoting regular attendance we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters;
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

At St Martin's CE Primary School our approach to improving and rewarding good attendance is:

- Rewarding high school attendance with extra OPAL time
- Issuing attendance improvement letters where low attendance has been addressed
- Issuing attendance certificates weekly to classes and termly to children

## **8.2 Supporting attendance**

Broadly speaking, the role of our staff is to ensure that the school is a calm, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn, which is the foundation of securing good attendance. We will achieve this by promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing through a whole-school approach to pupil mental health, and by developing trusted relationships with parents/carers and families that involves them in the conversation about the school's ethos.

Where pupils are at risk of poor attendance, we will work with each pupil and their parents/carers to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. If the issue persists, we will take an active part in multi-agency efforts with the local authority and other partners/professionals. Where there are multiple agencies involved in supporting a pupil, the school will call a Team around the Child (TAC) or Team around the Family (TAF) meeting to formalise arrangements for working together to provide suitable support.

For pupils with physical or mental health conditions or special education needs, this could also include pastoral support and where required, or other additional support and adjustments.

## **9 Attendance monitoring**

### **9.1 Monitoring attendance**

Our schools will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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

### **9.2 Analysing attendance**

Our schools will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **9.3 Using data to improve attendance**

Our schools will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils 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

### **9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Provide individualized pastoral support from the Learning Mentor
- Closely monitor the child's attendance and keep families informed of current attendance figures

#### **10 Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated or as indicated as the beginning of this policy. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Board of Directors.

#### **11 Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Children with health needs who cannot attend school
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

## Appendix A – Application for Exceptional Leave of Absence

The Department for Education has advised schools to only authorise leave of absence in ‘exceptional’ circumstances, hence St Martin’s CE Primary School will not approve any absence in term time, except in such circumstances. The Headteacher will determine whether the reason given for requesting leave of absence is exceptional or not. Please also note that there is no automatic right to take holidays in term time nor will your child/children’s overall attendance affect the Headteacher’s decision.

Please complete the section below and return to school **at least 4 weeks** before the requested absence. School will endeavour to respond to your request within 10 school days. If your request for leave of absence is approved your child will be expected to collect and complete all missed work. Please note that taking your child away during the school term is detrimental to their educational progress.

If leave of absence is taken without approval, a Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning. Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 per parent / carer per child; between 22 and 28 days it is £120. Penalty notices are issued to each parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28-day deadline, the matter will be taken to court.

Please think carefully before deciding to request exceptional leave.

<b>Name of Pupil:</b>		<b>Date of Birth:</b>	
		<b>Class/Year Group:</b>	

<b>Address:</b>	
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<b>Leave requested:</b>	<b>From (date):</b>		<b>To (date):</b>	
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**Reason for Exceptional Leave request:** This must be completed. If the absence is for religious observance, please include the name and contact details of your place of worship.

<b>Name of Parent/Carer:</b>			
<b>Address:</b>			
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Name of Parent/Carer:</b>			
<b>Address:</b>			
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

This is an example of the number of lessons your child will miss. Remember these will not be repeated.

1 days absence = 6 lessons missed

3 days absence = 18 lessons missed

1 weeks absence = 30 lessons missed

2 weeks absence = 60 lessons missed

**Exceptional leave absences which have not been agreed by our school will be marked as unauthorised absences. A Penalty Notice or other action may be considered by the school or the local authority.**

**For School Use:**

Any previous Exceptional Leave (any Academic Year)	Yes/No*	No. of days:	
Meeting arranged with parent/carer	Yes/No	Date:	
Request authorised	Yes/No	Date:	