



FRINTON ON SEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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Ratified/Approved: by School Governing Body

Chair of Governors: Mrs S Young

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Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. The staff at Frinton-on-Sea Primary School take seriously their responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils, it is vital that children feel their presence in school is important and that they are missed when absent or late.

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of staff, parents, governors and authority involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Aims

- maximise the attendance of all pupils.
- provide a positive and welcoming environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.
- monitor and support pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.
- work closely with and make full use of support from the wider community including the Missing Education and Child Employment Service (Previously Education Welfare Service) and other Social Services.

School Attendance and the Law Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority. The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A). Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Authorised Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a mutually agreed legitimate reason and the school has received the correct notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school for a birthday treat during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Punctuality

The school gates are opened at 8.30, morning registration will take place at 8.45 a.m. Pupils arriving in this period will be marked as present. At 8.45 a.m. the main pupil gates are locked and pupils arriving are directed through the office gates. Pupils arriving at the office between 8.45 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. are recorded in the late book. Those who arrive after 8.45 a.m. will be marked in the registers as late (L) – those children arriving after the registers have closed will be marked unauthorised absence (U). Parents are asked to report reasons for lateness in the signing in book in reception. Records are also kept for children going to and from medical appointments etc.

Roles & Responsibilities

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

Pupils should:

- do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually.
- inform a trusted adult if there is a reason for not attending school for example if they are being bullied.
- be happy and encourage others to feel happy by encourage friendship and a sense of belonging .

Parents should

- keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum.
- offer a reason for any period of absence or lateness.
 - telephone school before 9.00 a.m. on the first day of absence and to give a reason for absence.
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn.
- take family holidays during school holiday periods.
- seek permission before booking any holiday in term time.
- support their child in maintaining high levels of attendance and recognising their successes and achievement.

Governors should:

- set annual targets for attendance.
- monitor progress towards these annual targets for attendance.
- evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

Head Teacher should:

- ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- Work in partnership with parents/ carers if attendance and/or punctuality is an issue.
- work in partnership with the Missing Education and Child Employment service if attendance and/or punctuality is an issue.
- provide governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
- communicate with parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance or punctuality. Arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets.
- make appropriate judgments as to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Class teachers should:

- maintain class registers accurately, providing an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
- organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.
- raise any issues which may affect a child's attendance.

Office staff should:

- monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports where necessary.
- ensure that a satisfactory written reason for every absence has been established for every child.
- record the reasons for absence in the registers.
- liaise with the head teacher about whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Procedures

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, who will endeavor to contact a parent or guardian on the first day of absence.

When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence. This note is then kept in school for the remainder of the academic year.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child. On the first day of absence, where the parent/carer has not phoned, the school office will call the family/carers to seek an explanation and return date for the pupil. A school record will be kept of all phone calls and outcomes.

Should there be Continuing absence be identified a letter is sent to the parents/carers (Appendix 4). If there is no improvement the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Any pupil who is absent without explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Education Welfare Officer. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action it has taken.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with parents through personal interviews. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Health Adviser if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the school's Educational Welfare Officer.

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

Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. We expect parents to complete a 'Request for Absence' Form. The Head Teacher will then decide whether the absence can be authorised.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 28 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Promoting good attendance

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive a reward for attendance. There are special attendance rewards for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

The Learning Mentor establishes supportive links with parents related to the well being of children and good attendance. She will support pupils and families who are finding regular attendance or punctuality a problem.

Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year, these are agreed by governors at the annual target-setting meeting. We aspire to achieve 100% attendance and punctuality. We aim to achieve 97% in the Academic Year 2015/16. The national average for 2014/15 was 94.8% and the school average for 2014/15 was 95.4%.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the head teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the head teacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.