

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" Hebrews 10:24-25



Frenchay

C of E Primary School

Believe • Belong • Become

"At Frenchay, we *believe* in every child's potential, foster a sense of *belonging*, and empower them to *become* successful learners"

Title attendance policy

Date issued: September 2025

Signed: Michael Backett

Chair of Governors: David Williams

Our school is underlined by Christian values. We aim to work with parents, church and community to help each child flourish in all aspects of their lifelong development. We are an inclusive school, valuing and respecting everyone equally and unconditionally. We teach pupils to set high expectations of themselves and show compassion towards others. All members of Frenchay Primary behave in way that upholds these core values.

Rationale

The school believes that regular attendance and excellent punctuality are the foundations for academic achievement and personal development. They establish a responsible attitude towards the opportunities available at school and underpin the basis for the world of work. Attendance and punctuality are strongly linked to pupils' well-being and safety. Regular attendance demonstrates a commitment to learning and the school community

The Department for Education, in the Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance August 2024 states:

Attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

Why attendance is important.

At Frenchay Primary School our curriculum is set up so that it builds on prior learning. This is both short term, day to day, and long term between year groups. We do build in some time for revision and repeating, however we can never compensate completely for missing days or weeks.

Families can sometimes not realise the cumulative effect of multiple single days off school and it is easy to miss weeks of schooling each year in this way.

Good attendance is not just about academic success. For children to feel part of a team they need to be present. Our reward systems, house point and marbles in the jar, supports this. Children with regular attendance get the very best out of our offer. They know what is going on and feel connected to their peers.

Our expectation is that pupils arrive on time and attend regularly. That means attending every day that the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for not doing so.

In this policy, we explain the different types of absence and how they are recorded. This policy also explains how we will actively promote good attendance throughout the community and how we encourage our pupils to achieve this. We strive to achieve a high percentage of attendance as a whole school, as well as at individual level. We understand that attendance at primary phase is facilitated by parents, especially in Key Stage 1 and therefore children are not publicly rewarded or identified for their individual attendance. Where attendance expectations are not met, we will identify and address the barriers that prevent this.

The school will communicate attendance matters to parents / carers via text, telephone, email and letter. Discussion about attendance will also take place at parent/carer consultation meetings and individual attendance meetings if required (the Education Welfare Consultant that supports the school with promoting attendance, may be present for these).

Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that parents / carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that registered pupils of school age attend school regularly and punctually and that they receive an education suitable for their aptitude and ability.

The school has a legal responsibility for maintaining school registers and taking the register twice a day. The school also has a responsibility for reporting absence to the Local Authority. The school also has safeguarding responsibility and duty of care to all our pupils.

Frenchay Primary School has an attendance team consisting of:

Mr Backett – Deputy Head / School Attendance Champion

Mrs Dawson – Headteacher

Ms Wilson – Attendance Administrator

Ms Say – Attendance Administrator

Mrs Victoria Franklin – SG Education Welfare Consultant

They regularly meet to discuss initiatives to improve attendance as a whole school and also to look at support for individual students and families.

Parent / carer responsibilities - Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child receives a suitable full-time education, which means attending primary school every day

unless they are ill, have permission for a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, or observe a religious day. Parents should inform the school of any absence as soon as possible and only request a leave of absence for truly exceptional reasons.

Pupil responsibilities – we encourage our pupils to become independent young people including taking responsibility for their attendance and punctuality when this is age appropriate. We support pupils to do this by providing road safety lessons, allow them to bring phones to school so they can be tracked safely and providing a clear point of contact for arrival at school.

Local authority responsibilities – Local authority team attendance team meet with the school termly to discuss attendance and children who are persistently absent.

Attendance Registers and Timings

- School gates open at 8:30am daily
- Teacher comes to playground at 8.45am
- Class collected from playground at 8.50am
- The leadership team close the gates 8.50am.
- Morning register is taken at 8.55am and closes at 9.15am
- Afternoon register is taken at 1.05pm and closes at 1.25pm
- The end of the school day is 3:30pm

Punctuality:

By law registers can only be kept open for a maximum of 30 minutes

- Children arriving after 8.50am are considered late and will be recorded as 'L' (late arrival) and must be signed in at the main office stating the reason for arriving late to school.
- Children arriving after 9:15am without a good reason, will be recorded as 'U' (unauthorised late arrival) this counts as an absence for that session.
- Persistent late arrival will be investigated by the school attendance team and appropriate support offered.

Absence from school

There are only two categories of absence from school:

Authorised – approved

Unauthorised – not approved

Only the Headteacher (or the Deputy Head in their place) can approve an absence from school. That is the law.

Absence will be recorded using the codes recommended by the Department for Education Guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance update August 2024.

Requests for leave of absence in term time must be submitted in writing in advance to the Head teacher, who will treat every request on an individual basis and respond accordingly. The Headteacher can only authorise leave of absence in term time for exceptional circumstances.

DFE guidance states - ‘Generally a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance’

Authorised (approved) absence – types of authorised absence that may be approved:

- ❖ Leave of absence - for bereavement, funeral, wedding (for a limited amount of time)
- ❖ Medical absence for appointments – at Hospital or Orthodontic appointments. (Non-urgent routine check-up appointments should be made for after school hours or during the school holidays.) Pupils are expected to be absent for the minimal amount of time and not absent for the whole day. We monitor the amount of time missed due to medical appointments carefully.
We acknowledge that hospital and specialist clinic appointments, including orthodontic and on-going dental treatment may require a student having time out of school. Our expectation is that the minimum amount of learning is lost. We will seek an explanation from parents where a whole day is missed for this reason.
Proof of unavoidable medical appointments in school time must be provided for the school. This can be in the form of appointment card / text message or prescription note

Illness

- ❖ Illness – parents / carers should be specific about what illness their child’s illness is, when they feel they will return or next steps if they feel the illness may continue (e.g. GP appointment). Diarrhoea and vomiting requires children to stay off for 48hrs from their last bout.
- ❖ Pupils are likely to experience bouts of illness from time to time. Some will be living with chronic or more serious medical conditions that impact on their attendance. We have a duty to support pupils in these circumstances to ensure they do not miss out on education.

- ❖ When a pupil is identified as having frequent absence for reasons of minor illness, a meeting will be arranged to discuss this with the Head teacher or Deputy Head and the Education Welfare Consultant to consider whether an individual health care plan is appropriate
- ❖ Religious observance -one day to participate in an organised religious event
- ❖ If a student is suspended from school for a behaviour related incident, this is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised (not approved) absence – types of absence that will not be approved

- ❖ Absence due to birthday, shopping for uniform, looking after family members
- ❖ Holiday in term time.
- ❖ Late arrival to school after the register has closed has to be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless there is an exceptional reason

Unauthorised absence can lead to parents /carers being fined by the Local Authority.

Following a change in the law on 19th August 2024, a national framework exists in relation to penalty notices. The school may refer for a Penalty Notice if the threshold is met. A Penalty Notice (fine) may be issued to a parent in one or more of the following circumstances where 10 sessions of unauthorised absence are recorded in 10 school weeks (i.e. 100 sessions). There are 2 sessions per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. A Penalty Notice will be issued where*:

1. An absence is due to unauthorised leave of absence over 10 sessions (half days)
2. The child is persistently late arriving at school after registers have closed
3. A combination of 10 or more sessions are recorded over 10 school weeks and the school is not satisfied with the reason(s) resulting in unauthorised absence
4. The fine is currently £80 (per parent, per child) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days, per parent per child.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A letter sent to families from the Local Authority in July 2024 regarding Penalty Notices can be found [here](#).

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

All absence – authorised and unauthorised – will be analysed and subject to challenge to ensure that any concern regarding frequency, pattern or validity is acted upon swiftly to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met and children don't miss out on learning.

Parents / carers are expected to contact the school by 8.45am, by phone or email on the first day of absence (and each day thereafter where appropriate) informing the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return to school.

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 (at any point in the school year). Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance. There is a strong link between attendance and attainment, and it is shown that this link is cumulative over the period of time a student is in education. Persistent and severe absence also impacts on friendships and social interaction. Persistent and severe absence is required to be reported to the DFE and rates of persistent absence are published about the school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data regularly to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents / carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for continued persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary.

Formalised Support

- Where more support is needed, or where school support has not brought about change or improvements, the school will work with the Local Authority School Attendance Team. This may include making a referral to the Family Link team.

Reduced Timetables

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible.

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part time timetable for a prolonged period.

Safeguarding

All unexplained absence from school will be followed up each day by contacting parents / carers. If no response is obtained, contact will be made with people listed as emergency contact numbers to ascertain a student's whereabouts and safety. Parents / carers are required to provide the school with two emergency contact numbers. Where no response is received we may make a home visit and/or a referral to the EWC, Access and Response Team or the Police.

Removal from Roll

There are strict grounds as to when a school may remove a student from the admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, and the school must notify the Local Authority.

Monitoring

The school monitors attendance and absence data (including punctuality) daily, weekly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

The school also monitors incomplete weeks at school. We know that children who are regularly absent from school have gaps in their learning which will impact on progress.

From 19th August 2024, it will be mandatory for schools to share attendance and absence data on a daily basis with the DfE and the Local Authority.

Data is 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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

To improve attendance the school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Support Available in School

If a child and family are experiencing barriers to attending school, we are here to support this. The class teacher is the first line of support. The Senior Leadership Team are also available daily and can be contacted via the main school email or face to face in school. We have trained practitioners that can offer a range of therapies to support children's mental health which hopefully will lead to improved attendance.

Attendance Analysis

Concerns about absence from school and the likely impact on a pupil's progress will be communicated to both pupils and parents through our attendance procedures: -

- Unexplained absence from school will be followed up daily
- Where an explanation for absence is not specific i.e. 'unwell' we will seek to ascertain a definitive reason, so we can record absence precisely using the correct code
- Attendance of all pupils will be monitored regularly, and patterns of Broken Weeks / Incomplete weeks and low levels of attendance will be investigated.

At Frenchay we use a graduated response to discuss attendance concerns with parents:

Step 1	Regular days missed / regularly late to school	Contact made offering support via teacher face to face or by phone or email.
Step 2	No evidence of improvement following teacher conversation	Letter from Attendance Champion, offering support put pointing out a need for change
Step 3	No evidence of improvement following communication with School Attendance Champion	<p>School Attendance support meeting with school attendance champion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss impact of missed learning • investigate reasons for absence and solutions • set attendance targets • Individual Health Care Plan / Medial health care plan creation discussed • Set review period
Step 4	No evidence of improvement following meeting with School Attendance Champion	<p>Meeting with School Attendance Champion / Headteacher and / or EWC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School attendance contract • Consideration of Penalty Notice • Review Period
Step 5	No evidence of improvement following Attendance Contract / review meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no improvement after 4 weeks, school completes a request for an Attendance Panel review chaired by LA representative • Advise parent/carers that a panel meeting will take place involving the LA. • School Attendance Panel meeting takes place (Letter sent to arrange)

At every step of the graduated response our aim is to support and improve attendance and access to learning. If at any stage attendance improves as a result of the steps taken, there will be a return to the regular school monitoring that takes place.

Formal legislation and guidance informing this policy

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- [Arranging education for children who cannot attend because of health needs](#)