



# Frederick Holmes School

## Attendance Policy

This policy is approved by Frederick Holmes LGB - Spring 2023

Next Review - Spring 2024

..... Chair of Governors

## **1 Aim of this policy**

To support excellent levels of attendance for all pupils/students to enable fulfilment of their potential at Frederick Holmes School.

## **2 Key principles**

- High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are promoted and rewarded.
- It is the responsibility of everybody in the school to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- Some pupils/students find it harder than others to attend school. The school will work with pupils/students, parents and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents or pupils/students have should be discussed with the class teacher. Where more detailed support around attendance is required, parents and pupils/students should contact Assistant Head Teacher, Jim Weller ([jweller@frederickholmes.het.academy](mailto:jweller@frederickholmes.het.academy))

## **3 Roles and responsibilities**

### **3.1 Frederick Holmes School**

The school will:

- develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance
- work with pupils/students and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance
- investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions where appropriate
- take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- share information and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance
- regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data including to identify pupils or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future
- ensure that all pupils/students can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where there is evidence to suggest that this is not the case

- ensure that the trust board and school's leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy
- ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the non-statutory attendance guidance issued by the Department for Education, *Working together to improve school attendance (2022)*
- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (please refer to our Child Protection policy - please see school website or ask at reception for a hard copy)
- provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education
- regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels
- support students/pupils who are returning to education following long term absence
- ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system
- assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the school to a designated senior leader
- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106521/summary-table-of-responsibilities-for-school-attendance.pdf)) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

### 3.2 Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- ensure that their child arrives at the school on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment
- promote the importance of regular attendance at home
- follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the school (see section 6.1 below)
- avoid unnecessary absences
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- not take their child out of education for holidays during term time unless in exceptional circumstances authorised by the Head Teacher (see section 5.5 below)
- inform the school in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live
- observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106521/summary-table-of-responsibilities-for-school-attendance.pdf).

### **3.3 Pupils/Students**

We expect pupils/students to:

- attend the school regularly and on time
- be punctual to all lessons
- follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the school late (see sections 4 and 5 below).

### **3.4 Designated Attendance Lead**

The designated attendance lead (“DAL”) at the school is Jim Weller (Assistant Head Teacher).

The DAL will be responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at the Academy and will:

- offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- oversee attendance and absence data analysis
- ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents and pupils/students
- provide data and reports to support the work of the board of trustees (see below).

### **3.5 The board of trustees**

The board of trustees will:

- take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the trust and school’s ethos and policies
- ensure the school’s leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support pupils or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance
- share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across its academies
- hold termly attendance review meetings with the school
- require the school to report to the trustees on the school’s attendance at regular intervals
- have a dedicated attendance lead who will drive improvement across the trust and act as a central point for academies with attendance queries

## 4 Registration

- 4.1 The school maintains an attendance register and uses this to record each pupil/student's attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

Registration session	Start time	End time
Morning	9:00	9:30
Afternoon	1:15	1:30

- 4.2 Pupils/students who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Where pupils/students arrive after the end of a registration session, the process set out at section 5 applies.
- 4.3 The register is marked using the national attendance and absence codes which can be found in the Department for Education's guidance on attendance - [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612312/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

### Late arrival

- 4.4 If a pupil/student arrives at the school after the relevant registration period has ended, he/she must immediately go to the school reception to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.
- 4.5 If a pupil arrives at school late due to council transport issues they should not receive a late mark.

## 5 Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

- 5.1 **Authorised absence** - absence will only be authorised where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil/student to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the school can authorise absence.
- 5.2 **Unauthorised absence** - absence will be marked as unauthorised where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

### 5.3 Reporting absence from the school

- 5.3.1 Where a pupil/student is to be absent from the school without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform the Academy by telephone on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the school know when they expect the pupil/student to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the school on each day of absence.
- 5.3.2 On the day of return to the school, parents should also provide written confirmation of the reason(s) for the full period of absence.
- 5.3.3 In cases of prolonged absence due to illness, the parents/cares may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor. If this evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

### 5.4 Appointments

- 5.4.1 Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a pupil/student should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.

- 5.4.2 Where an appointment must take place during school time, the pupil/student should attend the school for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given to reception or the class teacher.
- 5.4.3 For the time absent from the school to be marked as an authorised, confirmation of the appointment by way of an appointment card or letter should be provided.

## **5.5 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)**

- 5.5.1 Parents and carers should make every effort to avoid taking pupils/students out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time. The school will only authorise a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances.
- 5.5.2 To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the Head Teacher and, wherever possible, at least 2 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.
- 5.5.3 Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Head Teacher will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:
- will be confirmed in writing
  - is solely at the Head Teacher's discretion and
  - is final.
- 5.5.4 Where permission is granted, the Head Teacher will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.
- 5.5.5 If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority.

## **5.6 Religious observance**

- 5.6.1 We recognise that pupils/students of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:
- falls during school time and
  - has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/student belongs,
- the absence from the school will be authorised.
- 5.6.2 We ask that parents/carers notify the school by writing to the pupil/student's class teacher in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

## **5.7 Coronavirus (Covid-19)**

- 5.7.1 There may be circumstances in which pupils/students cannot attend school due to Covid-19. The school will adhere to any current guidance issued by the Department for Education relating to the recording of attendance in relation to Covid-19.
- 6.7.2 If a pupil/student tests positive for coronavirus, their absence will be recorded as illness.

## 6 Addressing poor attendance and punctuality

6.1 The school will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils/students or groups of pupils/students who need it most. In doing so, the school will:

- monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
- provide regular attendance reports to class teachers when required
- identify pupils/students who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full year data to identify patterns and trends
- monitor the impact of school strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular pupils and particular groups
- work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups
- hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of pupils/students who the school and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable

6.2 Our procedures for managing unexplained absences can be found in Appendix 1.

6.3 Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:

- a pattern of unauthorised absence
- a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival
- persistent lateness

we will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.

6.4 Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental co-operation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place a parenting contract.

6.5 Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, the school will signpost and support access to any additional services.

6.6 Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the school and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine (£60 if paid within 21 days, £120 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents. The school will take into full consideration the exceptional medical needs when considering this.

6.7 When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:

- section 6 of the Department for Education's guidance, Working together to improve school attendance: [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/671111/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

- the local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.
- 6.8** In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Daily Absence Monitoring**

The Administration Team [CR/SE] at Frederick Holmes School have the following responsibilities:

- Check online registers have been completed for both morning and afternoon sessions.
- To monitor absence and check return dates
- Check with Teaching Staff the circumstances of the absence if not already given
- Ring Parents/Carers on the first day of absence for an explanation of the absence if the class are not aware of any reasons e.g. medical appointments.
- Edit the Scholarpack registers to show the specific codes to cover the absence
- Inform DAL of pupils who are absent before and after a holiday break
- Examine attendance data in collaboration with the DAL
- Update guidance for Teachers regarding completion of registers
- Provide statistics for Headteacher and Governors
- Input statistics for ASC, LA and DfE
- Administer the 'Holidays during term time' application forms
- Monitor 'Holidays during term time'

### **Absence due to a planned operation/procedure:**

- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to make school aware of any information concerning dates of entry to hospital.
- Teachers will share information with the SLT when they become aware that a child is going into hospital.
- Parents and carers also need to inform school transport when they have this information.
- During the period of time when the child is in hospital the school will send a letter reminding parents of the procedure for the pupil's return to school.

### **The following procedure will take place post-operation/ recovery:**

- Parents need to inform the school when their child is ready to return to school. The class teacher is informed of the proposed date of a child returning.
- A 'Back to school' meeting will be arranged including all relevant agencies.
- The child's 'new' needs will be discussed and relevant risk assessments adapted or re-written and shared with all appropriate staff and professionals.
- Class Teams to discuss the return - normal procedure will be that the child will return part-time in the first instance. This will depend on each individual circumstance.
- This will be reviewed at routine weekly meetings. Any changes must be reported to the DAL in good time.
- Parents will need to contact the transport teams to make arrangements.
- When there is agreement that the child is coping well with the situation there will be a return to a full-time placement.