

September 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Frome College Attendance

At Frome College we consider student happiness to be very important, and good attendance is an excellent indicator of how well your child is coping with school-life. We would, therefore, greatly appreciate your help to ensure that, when possible, your child attends school every day. Good attendance is important for a student to develop their social skills, by making positive bonds with their peers and their teachers, as well as ensuring that their academic progress is not disrupted in any way, thus maximising their future potential.

Unbroken attendance at Frome College is important for learning. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. This letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

Types of Absence

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Examples of unacceptable reasons

- shopping visits
- care for family members (unless registered young carers)
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- parents' work commitments or business trips
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)

Somerset Education Welfare Service monitor all unauthorised absence and may have involvement if certain threshold are met.

Illness and First Day Call

If your child is unable to attend college through illness you should inform us by telephone **01373 469008** on the first day of absence before 9.00am. Alternatively you can email us at FCC.Attendance@fromecollege.org. It is useful to know the expected day of return. If you do not supply us with this information we have a duty to contact you for so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure.

Where the child is absent through illness or medical appointments this will normally be counted as authorised. When attendance levels reach the thresholds below parents will be contacted in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support; this may include a medical plan

Table to show the impact of attendance levels on learning time

Descriptor	Attendance Rate	Number of days absent	Lost hours of learning
Excellent	100 - 99%	0 - 2	0 - 10
Good	98 - 96%	4 - 7.5	20 - 37.5
Requires improvement	95 - 91%	9.5 - 17	47.5 - 85
Persistent Absentee	90 - 86%	19 - 27	95 - 135
Critical	85% or below	28.5 or more	142.5 or more



How can I help my child raise their attendance over the next term:

- if your child is feeling poorly, do try and encourage them to attend school, as the school welfare officer will send a child home if she feels that this is necessary
- if your child is very poorly and is unable to attend school, please ring the school's absence line – **01373 469008** – and leave the following information: your child's full name, tutor group and the reason why your child is absent on that day – you are required to ring every morning that your child is off sick
- if your child has missed a day off school, please speak to them, or e-mail their teachers, to check that they have collected any work for the five missed lessons of that day
- if you notice that there is a particular barrier that is preventing your child from attending school, please contact your child's Head of House – details can be found on the website
- every two days of attendance to school means that your child's attendance will increase by 0.1%; therefore, within a few weeks, your child could move up a whole 1%

Medical/Dental Appointments

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside college hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where young people need to attend such appointments during the school day it is important that parents come first to the reception before collecting. Students returning need to sign into student services. Students are expected to come to college after their appointment whenever possible. Medical and dental appointments count as authorised absences.

Lateness

Please try to ensure that your child arrives at college so that they are present for registration; this is done at 8.45 am each day. Students are expected on site by 8.40am. Meeting and exchanging news with friends before school is important for the children's social development. Lateness affects learning and can cause further problems as key messages are missed. Where a genuine reason for lateness exists this will be an authorised absence but where explanations are inadequate or the lateness is after 9.00 am. then an absence (late) will be recorded. Students who are late need to report to student services to collect a late slip before going to class.

Leave of Absence

Holidays

It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time. The educational Welfare Service monitors all unauthorised absence and is likely to issue a fixed penalty fine. This can be very expensive.

Approved Public Performance

Where children are invited to perform in a licensed show or concert (e.g. orchestra, pantomime) you are asked to consult with staff about how much time away from school is required. Where possible such requests will be granted provided that the child's education is unlikely to suffer. The school will also be sympathetic towards leave to participate in a recognized city, county or national sporting event.

What we are aiming for

Average attendance would be around 95% for the year, with outstanding attendance above 96%.

What is considered as poor attendance?

Anything below 94% is weak, under 90% is poor and if attendance dips below 85% we will have serious concerns. Below 90% is regarded as persistent absence by the DFE. In this school we are aiming for every student to achieve attendance levels of at least 95%. We monitor attendance closely and provide termly reports on each student's attendance. You can also do this on parent portal. We systematically identify all those students whose attendance has fallen below 90% and issue a courtesy letter or make telephone call informing parents. We then monitor the students' attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see a pattern of unbroken weeks developing.

We hope that these notes will help you to have a clear understanding about the School's expectations in this matter. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and we would be very pleased to answer any questions you may have about our approach to maintaining and improving our attendance record.

Yours sincerely



Mrs V West
Assistant Principal