
Attendance Policy

Contents

| Page number | |
|-------------|--|
| 3 | 1. Introduction |
| 3 | 2. Purpose of this policy |
| 3 | 3. Principles |
| 4 | 4. Promoting good attendance |
| 4 | 5. Roles and responsibilities |
| 6 | 6. Monitoring attendance |
| 7 | 7. Procedures for registering students at Frome College |
| 7 | 8. Authorising absence |
| 7 | 9. Term time leave – holidays and extended leave |
| 8 | 10. Improving attendance |
| 8 | 11. Note on unauthorised attendance |
| 8 | 12. Re-integrating students who have been absent for a significant length of time |
| 8 | 13. Exceptional circumstances |

1. Introduction

Frome College expects the highest levels of attendance, and every student should aim for 100%. Full attendance is a critical factor in ensuring positive educational outcomes and that our students reach their social potential. We are committed to providing high quality inclusive learning opportunities for all students. Any problems that impede full attendance need to be identified and addressed as quickly as possible.

Frome College actively promotes and encourage excellent attendance (above 98%) for all our students. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a student's attendance then we will investigate the matter and attempt to work in partnership with parents/carers, students and outside agencies eg Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Students will have expectations regarding attendance and punctuality regularly addressed through the school assemblies and rewards systems so that the importance of good attendance is given a high profile within the school. The aim of this policy is to raise levels of achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in the school.

2. Purpose of this policy

- To improve the overall attendance percentage of students at school
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents/carers, teachers and governors
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- To provide support, advice and guidance on attendance to parents/carers and students
- To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

3. Principles

- Regular and full attendance at school is an essential part of being able to deliver a good education to students.
- Parents/carers have a legal duty under The 1996 Education Act to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis.
- The school has a legal duty to ensure the registration of students for morning and afternoon sessions of the school. If a student of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can authorise the absence, not parents/carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.
- Parents/carers do not have the right to take children out of school for a family holiday. Government states: 'Headteachers can only grant leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances. Any request for leave must be made in writing for the attention of the Principal in advance.'
- Unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents/carers can be reported to the Education Attendance Service when there are persistent attendance problems.

- We have a duty to validate absence due to on-going medical issues. Parents/carers may be invited to a meeting with a member(s) of staff and an action plan may be required to ensure that attendance is maximised. We may also discuss with parents/carers regarding our wish to liaise with medical professionals to ensure that absences from school due to medical reasons are reasonable.
- Attendance concerns are best resolved by discussion between the school, parents/carers and the student.

4. Promoting good attendance

Our policy is to place more emphasis on rewards rather than sanctions although we recognise that in a minority of cases effective sanctions are necessary. We will encourage good attendance by:

- Accurately completing attendance registers at the beginning of each session and within 10 minutes of the start of lesson 5 as this is the afternoon register.
- Following-up absences as part of our safeguarding procedures.
- Recording attendance on student reports
- Acknowledging individual's improvements in attendance
- Providing feedback on individual attendance data to students and where necessary, parents/carers
- Welcoming and supporting children returning to school after a long term absence and, where appropriate, provide work for catch up
- Identifying students 'at risk' as quickly as possible for special monitoring. Contacting the parents/carers of these students and invite them to an 'Attendance Meeting' with Head of House where appropriate
- Rewarding attendance for individual students on a regular basis
- Working with the EWO to address sustained periods of unauthorised absence

5. Roles and responsibilities

In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the students the importance of the education being provided.

5.1 Governors

- To ensure that the school has in place an attendance policy and monitor its effectiveness
- To receive regular reports from the Principal or delegated member of Leadership Team

5.2 Principal

- To oversee the whole policy
- To monitor the attendance of different groups of students
- To report to Governors on attendance issues on a termly basis
- To provide witness statements for and Court Action

These tasks maybe delegated to the Assistant Principal (Access to Learning) or other member of the Leadership Team.

5.3 Assistant Principal (Access to Learning)

- To liaise with Heads of House to ensure consistency across the Houses
- To oversee the collation and analysis of attendance data
- To produce an attendance profile for pre-16 students.
- To report to the school's leadership team on attendance matters and trends
- To have fortnightly liaison with the EWO to review cases and discuss potential concerns

- To oversee the registration process and be informed if registers are not completed accurately and on time
- To ensure a tracking process is in place for vulnerable students.
- To represent the College at pre-court meetings organised by EWO and where necessary prepare statements for court proceedings

5.4 Heads of House

- To oversee and monitor house attendance
- To ensure tutors accurately register students in morning registration including assembly mornings
- To ensure that reasons for absence are coded in the register. Follow-up any unexplained non-attendance to lessons
- To reinforce good practice at meetings and have a standing attendance agenda item
- To raise the profile of attendance at appropriate times (eg assemblies)
- Meet fortnightly with College attendance officer to review individuals, to identify students whose attendance has become a concern. More than two separate absences within a half term or overall attendance below expected level for the time of year
- Contact parents/carers regarding attendance and punctuality matters, hold meetings and ensure the relevant letters are sent
- Refer students/parents to other support eg PFSA
- To refer students to EWO for continued poor attendance
- To represent Frome College at parental contract meetings with parents and EWO. May need to look at interventions to improve attendance
- To organise the reintegration of long-term absentees
- Reward students who have excellent attendance (99-100%)
- Raise concern about inaccurate registers or registers not be taken on a regular basis
- Ensure students who have truanted make the time up

5.5 Attendance Officer

- To be the main point of contact for all parents regarding absence
- To compile the registration data on a daily basis including recording accurate information from parents/carers
- To ensure morning and afternoon registers are completed. Chase non completion ASAP. Report any persistent staff. Tutor to HOH, subject staff to HOF. Raise further concerns with Assistant Principal.
- To contact parents/carers to ascertain reasons for absence on the first day of absence via truancy call
- Reconcile registers with the information provided, truancy call, notes etc
- To liaise with Assistant Principal and HOH's on a regular basis to share information on absentees, holiday applications and other concerns
- Meet with HOH fortnightly to early identify problematic attendance and punctuality issues and update attendance tracker.
- Send relevant standard letters requested by HOH
- Keep accurate records of those students requiring medical evidence and monitor these students. Ensuring correct evidence is provided
- Liase with EWO and provide Register Certificates and other supporting documents as and when required.
- Liase with outside agencies around attendance, eg CLA children, CSC, off site provision.
- Attach paperwork to students SIMs linked documents
- Provide necessary paperwork for meetings and generate attendance reports as and when requested.

- Pre-populate registers for known events eg trips, sporting events. Check these registers are correct with the person leading activity on the day
- Contact parents when student reported leaving site without permission and or when they have returned

5.6 Tutors/Teachers

- To take an accurate register for am and lessons 1-5. morning registration and lesson 5 are a legal requirement.
- Only codes to be used / (present), L (late) and N (absent)
- To overwrite an absence mark with/mark if student is present in the room. But not to overwrite a pre-populated/mark if student not present in the room. Check comments box and if no information raise concern with HOH. Inform FCC attendance if student has further prepopulated marks that are not accurate e.g. student marked I but is present.
- Inform student services if a student leaves lesson without permission. This should be a phone call not an email.
- Tutors can reconcile registers, when information received from parents or pass this information to FCC Attendance. Place all notes from parent/carers explaining child's absence in SIMS comments
- Monitor patterns of attendance in tutor group and inform the HOH of any concerns
- Provide a supportive environment for students who need welcoming back to school

5.7 Parents/Carers

- Ensure that children leave for school on time
- Ensure children attend school regularly and punctually
- Contact the school on the first day of absence. Notify school of duration of absence or on every day of absence
- Provide a written letter of explanation or phone call to the school for all absences
- Not to take holidays during term time, however, if planning to, seek permission from the school before planned holiday by completing request form
- Endeavour, where possible, to make appointments for students out of school hours
- Support the school in all matters to ensure a punctual and regular attendance
- Ensure the school has the correct contact information
- Attend meetings regarding attendance

5.8 Students

- To arrive at school for 8.40am and be in registration for 8.45am
- Ensure that his/her attendance is maintained at the highest level possible
- Be responsible for ensuring that they receive their attendance mark, especially when arriving late and for bringing notes into school regarding planned absences
- Arrive at registration and lessons on time
- Provide written confirmation and sign out at Student Services if they need to leave site for an appointment

6. Monitoring attendance

Targets for improved attendance will be set annually by the school Governing Body at the Student and Families Committee. Attendance target will be reviewed and tracked by HOH, Assistant Principal and the Governor's Student and Families Committee. Rewards will be issued for excellent or improved attendance. The targets will be aspirational but achievable.

At the start of each year, the Governors' Student and Families Committee will check whether these targets were met and, if not, try to establish why. Part of the evaluation process will be to look at what interventions have been successful. This will include considering:

- Attendance data for individual students, tutor groups and the school as a whole
- Have attendance issues been included as topics in school assemblies, tutor periods or as a theme for any other curricular lessons?

7. Procedures for registering students at Frome College

Registration will take place at the start of the day and at the beginning of each lesson using the school's recognised method of registration. HOH and tutors play a major role in promoting good attendance, but will only be successful with the support of all the teaching staff following procedures and identifying concerns. Not only is accurate monitoring of attendance a legal responsibility it is also one of the most important safeguarding procedures that we carry out on a daily basis.

Daily procedures and routine for registering student attendance in the morning.

Registration should be amongst the first events of registration time and in each subsequent lesson. It sets the tone for the rest of the lesson and the learning that will follow. It is vital that registration is conducted punctually, and in a positive, purposeful and business-like climate.

- Teachers/Tutors will take the register using SIMS Lesson Monitor. Students are marked present (/) or absent (N) on the screen. If students arrive after being marked absent then the teacher should change the mark to late (L). If a student is late, the tutor should also enter the number of minutes late by using the 'minutes late' facility. As soon as the register has been taken the teacher/tutor should ensure that the register is saved so that the data is stored.
- Supply teachers will be given login details for SIMS and will use the Lesson Monitor system to take the register in every lesson they teach.
- Teachers covering for absent colleagues are expected to take the register for the cover lesson. The details of the group being covered will appear on the timetable bar when the teacher signs in to SIMS.
- Students who fail to be punctual on a regular basis will be placed on lateness report to be monitored by HOH which will be signed daily by parents/carers. HOH run detentions for students who are consistently late.
- If no contact can be made or reason given is unacceptable then students will be given an unauthorised absence.

8. Authorising absence

If a Tutor has a suspicion regarding a note explaining an absence then it should be referred to the HOH who will make enquiries and will decide on any subsequent action.

In cases of regular absence, the school may insist that all absences need to be supported by appropriate medical evidence.

9. Term time leave – holidays and extended leave

The school can only grant leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances. Any request for leave must be made in writing for the attention of the Principal in advance. Frome College follows the Local Authority's guidelines to address attendance which may include the use of statutory powers which involves the use of Penalty Notices and Court prosecution. Taking a child on holiday in term time interrupts the learning of the whole class. Teachers have to spend time helping children catch up when

they return. Parents should arrange holidays for the 13 week school holiday periods. Schools are open 190 days which leaves 175 days of the year for a holiday.

Both the school and Somerset County Council:

- Expect parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school regularly. Any absence from school will impact on educational achievement, success in later life and longer term health and wellbeing;
- Wish to ensure the law is upheld. Parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance at school of their child.

10. Improving attendance

In cases where student's attendance causes the school concern, Frome College will undertake a series of steps to ensure that the situation is rectified:

1. Issue a standard letter of concern regarding poor level of attendance.
2. If the attendance continues to drop, the school will issue a letter 2, expecting any future absences to be supported by medical evidence. If no evidence is provided, the absence will be unauthorised.

If there are 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 12 week period, a referral will be made to the EWO. At this point a Warning Penalty Notice may be issued or a Parent Contract Meeting arranged.

11. Note on unauthorised attendance

An unauthorised absence is when parents/carers do not provide a reason that the school believes to be justifiable.

12. Re-integrating students who have been absent for a significant length of time

Students who have been absent for a period of time may require a reintegration programme designed by their HOH and/or another member of Access to Learning Team in liaison with other agencies, as appropriate. This will be designed to meet their individual needs and allow a smooth re-integration into school.

13. Exceptional circumstances

Frome College recognises that there can be, from time to time, circumstances that affect a student's attendance that cannot be foreseen and those not covered normally in this policy:

- Days of religious observance
- Traveller children
- Young carers
- Family bereavements
- Other circumstances deemed 'exceptional' by the school

In these circumstances the school asks that Parent/Carers keep the school informed regularly in order to allow us to support the student as best as possible. HOH will take the appropriate decisions on authorising absence in these situations.