



FRAYS

Academy Trust

Frays Academy Trust Attendance Policy

(incorporating arrangements during Covid-19 restrictions)

Date Ratified: September 2020

Review Date: March 2023

Approval

Signed by Chair of Directors	
Date of Approval/Adoption	September 2020
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1 Aims

The Frays Academy Trust aims to create a caring, secure and stimulating environment in which all children are enabled to develop intellectually, spiritually, socially, morally and physically to gain an understanding of the diverse cultural society in which they live.

Pupils need to attend school regularly and punctually if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Our policy applies to all children registered at our schools and this policy is made available to all parents/carers via our school websites and the trust website.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, our schools work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are designed to ensure this happens. **We regard 96% attendance as the expected level.** Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Each of our schools is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. This Policy sets out how we will achieve this together.

2 Legislative basis

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3 The attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

From the start of the autumn term 2020, pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil

- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

During the period of Covid-19 restrictions, the following arrangements will apply while children must learn in bubbles and adults are required to socially distance. These arrangements will be reviewed on a half-termly basis. Pupils must arrive in school by the time given in the table below for their year group bubble on each school day. The register for the day/session will be taken and will be kept open for 30 minutes.

Year group	Start time	Entry point	End time	Exit point
Nursery	8:20am/12:00pm	Main Nursery Gate	11:20am/3:00pm	Main Nursery Gate
Reception	8:50am	Front gate	3:20pm	Front gate
Year 1	8:30am	Front gate	3:00pm	Front gate
Year 2	8:40am	Back gate	3:10pm	Back gate
Year 3	8:50am	Back gate	3:20pm	Back gate
Year 4	8:40am	Front gate	3:10pm	Front gate
Year 5	8:50am	Main gate	3:20pm	Main gate
Year 6	8:40am	Main	3:10pm	Main

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4 Types of absence

The minimum expected level of attendance for Frays is **96%** and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the local authority Participation Team using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any child that is seen to have become persistently absent or is at risk of moving towards persistent absence is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

5 Absence procedures

5.1 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if your child is unable to attend due to ill health – as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, by email (stmatthews@fraysacademytrust.org) or phone call (01895442724).
- Send a note/email in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence. Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.
- For continued absence of more than **48 hours due to illness**, provide school with medical proof for the period away from school. For prolonged periods of absence due to continued illness, parents/carers must keep the school regularly updated.
- **Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number** – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone/or text/email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. We will also use Truancy Call to contact you.
- Monitor the absences over a period of time and write to you sharing your child's attendance percentage and the need for it to improve.
- Invite you in to discuss your child's attendance with our Attendance Officer, or Miss Barr if your child's attendance drops below 95%.
- Make a referral to the local authority Participation Team if your child's attendance continues to fall to below 90% and, if through our own internal monitoring and tracking systems, an improvement with attendance has not been secured with the parent/carer (via targeted letters and meetings).
- Where over the course of an academic year, your child has repeated periods of illness, we will ask parents/carers to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may also seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries with your GP and via the School Nurse.
- We may also carry out ad-hoc 'safe and well' home visits for the purpose of promoting attendance and ensuring pupil safety. At Frays we regard regular attendance as very important to assist in your child's progress, therefore visits at your home could be necessary in order to provide relevant support and/or advice.

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

5.2 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

5.3 Covid-19 – attendance

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19). The Government have introduced a new category of non-attendance which is described as ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’. This will apply where attendance would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State’s expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised).

Further information is available in the DfE [Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year](#).

The school will be required to make a daily return to the DfE.

5.3.1 Potential or actual case of Covid-19

- If your child has symptoms of Covid-19 they **must not** come to school. You and your child and your household will all need to self-isolate. The child will need to self-isolate for 10 days. Your household will need to self-isolate for 14 days. You must seek a test.
- If your child’s test is negative, and your child is well enough, and no longer has symptoms similar to Covid-19 they can stop self-isolating and return to school. The household can also stop self-isolating.
- If a child tests positive for Covid-19 they **must** self-isolate for 10 days. They **must not** come to school during the isolation period.
- If a child doesn’t have symptoms when tested and symptoms develop after the test they must then self-isolate for 10 days from the day the symptoms started.
- You must follow guidance from NHS track and trace text or email confirmation of the test results.

- After the isolation period, children can return if they do not have a temperature and feel well enough. If a cough or loss of taste/smell continues they can return as these symptoms can last for several weeks once infection has gone.
- If a child is self-isolating due to a household member having symptoms, they can return to school where testing proves negative for their household member.
- When there is a positive test, self-isolation for household members is 14 days from the date of the test. However, if the adult or child who tested positive didn't have symptoms when tested positive and then develops symptoms during their 10 day self-isolation period the household members' 14 day self-isolation re-starts on the day symptoms develop.
- If the child develops symptoms and tests positive they can return after 10 days unless they have a temperature. Their household would need to self-isolate for 14 days from the first day of their symptoms as described above.
- If your child is sent home to self-isolate because another person within their school bubble has a positive Covid-19 test, your child will need to self-isolate for 14 days. Parents and household members do not need to self-isolate unless the child or another household member develops symptoms.

The above is subject to Government advice/guidance and therefore may be subject to change during the Covid-19 restrictions.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

How we manage lateness:

- During the Covid-19 restrictions, the school day starts at the time designated for your child's year group bubble (see section 3) and we expect your child to be in class ready for learning by the allocated time.
- During the Covid-19 restrictions, if a child arrives late, after their scheduled drop-off time, they should be brought to the main gate and the office team will bring them into school.
- Registers are marked by 8:55am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.
- After 30 minutes, the registers will be closed by the office. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with Miss Bird (Attendance Officer) to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.
- Parents/carers should collect their child/children on time at the end of each school day at the allocated time for their year group (see table above).

How we manage late collection:

- When a child is not collected after school they will be taken to the school office and every effort will be made to contact you.

5.5 Term-time absence

At schools in Frays, we do not, as rule, grant term time leave unless there are exceptional and unavoidable reasons. The principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

The school will consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher/Head of School's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 5.1 and 5.2;
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart and to determine the number of days of observance;
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

In brief, this means that:

- Parents/carers cannot demand exceptional leave of absence as an automatic right.
- Requests must be in writing.
- All requests will be considered on their own merits.
- Absence will be granted only in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances.
- Authority to approve term time absences rests with the Headteacher/Head of School.

5.6 Procedure for requesting exceptional leave

The parent/carer will need to complete an 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' request form (Appendix A) and submit this to the school office with a minimum of 4 weeks prior to the intended period of absence; school will respond to the request within ten school days (letter and/or meeting). If the school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriately support will be offered to the parent/carer. Please note that for requests for exceptional leave at short notice, the Headteacher/Head of School may request evidence of, for example, when flights were booked.

A letter confirming whether or not the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer, within five school days of receipt of the Exceptional Leave of Absence request and/or the meeting.

5.7 Legal sanctions

Local authorities can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. The penalty is per parent, per child.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the local authority, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

6 Children missing from education

When a pupil is expected to join the school either at a normal time of starting (e.g. nursery or reception) or at any time and s/he does not arrive, the school will firstly try to make contact with the parents by phone or letter. If after one week no contact has been made the school will contact the local authority to find out whether the child had been registered elsewhere. After two weeks (10 school days) the school will complete a referral to the local authority who will follow the procedures for 'missing pupils'.

The pupil will not be removed from roll until the Local Authority has ascertained the pupil's whereabouts and safety and has confirmed that the pupil is registered at another school, is being educated otherwise or at the very minimum has made reasonable enquiries as to the missing child's whereabouts and been unable to trace them.

Parents leaving the country will be asked to provide evidence of flights, contact details, an address at which they can be contacted and details of the next school that their child will be attending.

If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or fails to return from a holiday the school will follow the normal procedures for investigating pupil absence (i.e. telephone calls, letters, invitations to meetings at the school etc). If the child does not return to school the matter will be referred to the local authority within two weeks and they will follow the procedures for 'missing pupils'. The pupil will not be removed from roll until the local authority has ascertained the pupil's whereabouts and safety or has made reasonable enquiries to this end.

If a pupil 'disappears' without any warning this will prompt a safeguarding concern; a referral will be made directly to children's services and possibly a referral to the police to request a welfare check.

7 Strategies for promoting attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

To help us all to focus on Promoting Regular Attendance we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters;
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

At St Matthew's CE Primary School our approach to improving and rewarding good attendance includes:

- Weekly certificates for whole-class high attendance
- Termly certificates for individual children's high attendance
- Non-uniform days to reward sustained whole-class high attendance
- Celebration of whole school high attendance in the weekly school newsletter

We support parents in improving school attendance by deploying the Frays Academy Trust Family Support Worker, holding meetings between parents and the school attendance officer (by telephone if necessary) and sending letters home to inform parents that their child/s attendance is falling.

8 Reporting to parents

We will talk to you about your child's attendance during parent consultation meetings.

9 Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Officer monitors pupil absence on a daily/weekly/monthly basis. Parents are expected to contact the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to contact the school each day their child is ill. If a pupil's absence goes over **48 hours** we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If, after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to increase, we will consider involving the local authority Participation Team.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors and the Board of Directors.

10 Roles and responsibilities

10.1 The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors will approve the Frays Academy Trust Attendance Policy. The Board will keep an overview of attendance across the Trust and set attendance targets for each school.

10.2 The Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body of each of our schools is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher/Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy.

10.3 The Headteacher/Head of School

The Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher/Head of School also manages other staff involved in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and making referrals to the local authority Participation team.

10.4 The Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level;
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher/Head of School;
- Works with Participation team to tackle persistent absence;
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues;
- Advises the Headteacher/Head of School on when to make referrals to the local authority.

10.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

10.6 Office/reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls and emails from parents about absence and record them on the school system.

11 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Executive Headteacher/CEO and approved by the Board of Directors.

12 Links with other policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Appendix A – Application for Exceptional Leave of Absence

The Department for Education has advised schools to only authorise leave of absence in ‘exceptional’ circumstances, hence St Matthew’s CE Primary School will not approve any absence in term time, except in such circumstances. The Headteacher/Head of School will determine whether the reason given for requesting leave of absence is exceptional or not. Please also note that there is no automatic right to take holidays in term time nor will your child/children’s overall attendance affect the Headteacher/Head of School’s decision.

Please complete the section below and return to school **at least 4 weeks** before the requested absence. School will endeavour to respond to your request within 10 school days. If your request for leave of absence is approved your child will be expected to collect and complete all missed work. Please note that taking your child away during the school term is detrimental to their educational progress.

If leave of absence is taken without approval, this information will be passed to the Participation Team and a Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning. Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 per parent / carer per child; between 22 and 28 days it is £120. Penalty notices are issued to each parent, per child. Further details are available on the Hillingdon Council website or from the Participation Team. If the fine is not paid by the 28-day deadline, the matter will be taken to court.

Please think carefully before deciding to request exceptional leave.

Name of Pupil:		Date of Birth:	
		Class/Year Group:	

Address:	
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Leave requested:	From (date):		To (date):	
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Reason for Exceptional Leave request: This must be completed. If the absence is for religious observance, please include the name and contact details of your place of worship.

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Name of Parent/Carer:			
Address:			
Signature:		Date:	

Name of Parent/Carer:	
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Address:			
Signature:		Date:	

This is an example of the number of lessons your child will miss. Remember these will not be repeated.

1 days absence = 6 lessons missed

3 days absence = 18 lessons missed

1 weeks absence = 30 lessons missed

2 weeks absence = 60 lessons missed

Exceptional leave absences which have not been agreed by our school will be marked as unauthorised absences; these will be referred to the Local Authority's Participation Officer (PO) for consideration of a Penalty Notice or other action.

For School Use:

Any previous Exceptional Leave (any Academic Year)	Yes/No*	No. of days:	
Meeting arranged with parent/carer	Yes/No	Date:	
Request authorised	Yes/No	Date:	