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# Attendance Policy 2025-26

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## Aims of the policy

To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.

## Objectives of the policy

- To meet the government attendance targets set for us as a school.
- To create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- To ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days.

## Academy Responsibilities

- To clearly communicate the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- If home visits are undertaken and there is no answer at the home address, a letter will be posted through the door stating that school has tried to visit. Additional services will be contacted if the child is deemed to be vulnerable.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To promote and reward good attendance.
- Where there are concerns around attendance, staff will log this onto CPOMs and alert the members of staff responsible for attendance.
- Regular meetings between the Attendance Team.
- Attendance meetings/conversations to be logged by the academy as appropriate.
- Attendance Team to support families and children to maintain strongest attendance possible.

## Parental Responsibilities

- To ensure that children are in school from 8:45am as teaching begins the minute children enter the building.
- To inform the front office on every day of any absence before 9:15am via phone call, email, MCAS app or in-person at the school office.
- To work with the school to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical, including dental, appointments during the school day (medical evidence may be requested if needed).

- If parents, guardians, or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should: talk to their child and teacher; it may be something simple that they need your help in resolving.
- To avoid holidays being taken in term time as per the latest DFE guidance (August 2024).

## The Fine and Prosecution Process

The school Attendance Team will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss with the Head of Academy. Where issues persist, the following will be initiated:

### Pre-process

#### Risk of Persistent Absenteeism

- Letter sent home once child's attendance drops below 95% or there have been 4 unauthorised absence sessions & will be monitored for 14 days.
- Letter sent home once child's attendance drops below 93% or there have been 8 unauthorised sessions & a meeting with Attendance Officer and Class Teacher.
- Meeting with Headteacher once attendance drops below 90%.
- Children to be placed for support if needed. Family wake up calls, regular check-ins with parents and children etc.

#### Unauthorised Absences

An unauthorised absence is given for the following reasons:

- If school has been informed of the absence after 9:15am
- If school has not been communicated with by parents
- If the school does not deem the reason for absence to be appropriate
- An unauthorised late mark (U code) is given if the lateness to school is such that it is after 9:30am.

### Formal Processes

See Appendix B (Flow Chart of Formal Prosecution Processes)

## Absence During Term Time (e.g. holidays)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

*Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.*

It is the policy of Friarage Community Academy not to authorise any absence other than proven illness or exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised absences may result in prosecution proceedings including a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate notice would be issued to each separate child.

If a child has a planned absence, parents/carers must complete the planned absence form (Appendix A). The Head will consider whether the absence falls under exceptional circumstances or not before authorising the absence, however this guidance has changed in August 2024 and the list of exceptional circumstances is now very limited.

If no planned absence form is completed, the absence will automatically be unauthorised.

**As of 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024, the rate per child, per adult is £80 if paid within 21 days and rising to £160 per child, per adult is paid between 22 and 28 days.**

There are 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are 13 weeks of school holidays per year. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period of school holidays.

## Sickness Absence During Term Time

- The academy school office must be notified of your child's absence before 9:15am every day of your child's illness. It is a parent's responsibility to notify the academy.
- If you let the academy know of the absence via a MCAS app message or email, then we may call you to clarify the illness further.
- If the academy is not informed of absence before 9:15am, we will call parents. At this point all absences will be marked as unauthorised.
- We may use the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.
- For minor illnesses that require medication, we are able to administer medication for you at school. There is a small form to fill out. This is important so learning is not missed unnecessarily.
- We are legally expected to complete home visits after a minimum period of 3 days of continuous absence. This is regardless of whether or not school have been contacted around these absences.
- Additional home visits will be completed for children that are deemed vulnerable, attendance concerns & any other time with the approval or request of the Head of Academy/DSL.

## Lateness

- Arriving to school on time is an important life skill that all of the children have to adhere to. Being late means missing large, important chunks of their learning and can result in children not making the progress with their work that they deserve.
- The academy day starts at 8:45am. The registers close at 8:50am. After this time, children will be marked as late. (An L code).
- If children arrive after 9:20am, their absence will be unauthorised for the morning session, and a U code will be given.
- U codes/unauthorised absences will be included within the prosecution process and will result in a fine once enough have accumulated.

## Promoting Good Attendance

See Appendix C (Rewards Document)

Families will be supported in getting their child/ren to school in many ways including: wake up calls, offering breakfast club places and bespoke attendance rewards etc.

## The Role of the Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The Education Welfare Service has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states, *"If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence."*

The EWS may issue a Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.

**The academy will always pursue enforcement when a child has reached the triggers for penalty fines and/or prosecution.**

# Appendix A – Planned Absence from School Form

Child(ren)'s Name(s)	DOB	School Name	Year / Class

Please add all children to one form

Parental Full Name	Parents Tel	Parental DOB
Home Address of parent(s) responsible for this absence		Email address

## I request permission for my child/ren to be absent from school between:

Date of first day of school absence	Date to of return to school	Total days absent from school

All requests should be discussed with the Headteacher prior to submitting this form. Please detail below the reason for your request for absence from school in term time and include any supporting information. The Headteacher will not be able to consider your request without your supporting documents. *Please read carefully the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents attached.*

### Parent's Declaration:

I have read the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents and understand I/we may receive a penalty notice or further legal action if my/our child receives unauthorised school absence as a result of this request. **Please note the school day is divided into 2 registration periods, for example if your child is absent for one day this equals 2 sessions and a five day absence equals 10 sessions.**

Name:		Name:	
Signed:		Signed:	
Date:		Date:	

Please note:  
We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement from their school first. Headteachers cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance.  
Any disagreement between estranged parents should be resolved prior to submitting this request to your child's school.

### For School Use Only

The school has considered your request for leave of absence and your child's absences will be recorded as follows: -

Authorised Sessions:		Unauthorised Sessions:		Unauthorised sessions YTD	
Signed:		Position:		Date	

Original signed and completed forms to be retained with pupil's records.  
Copy should be returned to the parent/carer of the pupil to confirm authorised or unauthorised absence prior to the intended absence period.

## Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances

### Information for Parents

There is no longer a provision in law for Headteachers to authorise an absence for the purpose of a term time holiday.

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. This has been defined by the Supreme Court as 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school' meaning attending every occasion available unless authorised by the Head Teacher. There is, however, a discretionary power held by Headteachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Please note this is **not an entitlement**.

**Please note that supporting documents to aid decision making must be submitted at the time of your request for absence.**

Any unauthorised absence will be recorded on your child's attendance records. This may result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

### Penalty Notices

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the local authority and schools have statutory powers to tackle poor school attendance and/or unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the Headteacher has not given permission for or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent. If your child accrues 10 sessions of unauthorised absence, you may be liable for a penalty notice (one day's absence equals two sessions and a five-day absence is equal to 10 sessions etc.).

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing.

Parents must complete a request for exceptional leave form and submit this to the school, allowing for sufficient time to enable the school to consider the request and inform the parent of the decision.

Fines are issued for unauthorised absence of 5 or more days, and each school day is divided into 2 registration periods. **For example, if your child is absent for one day this equals 2 sessions, and a five-day absence is equal to 10 sessions.**

- If your request is declined and you take your child out of school each person with day-to-day care of the child(ren) may be issued with a £160 penalty notice if paid within 28 days, this reduces to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice within 3 years of the first penalty notice, the second penalty notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- If a third penalty notice referral is received within a 3-year period, a further penalty notice fine cannot be issued and legal action will be considered.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this, or if you need help to achieve an improvement, please contact your child's school to discuss this.

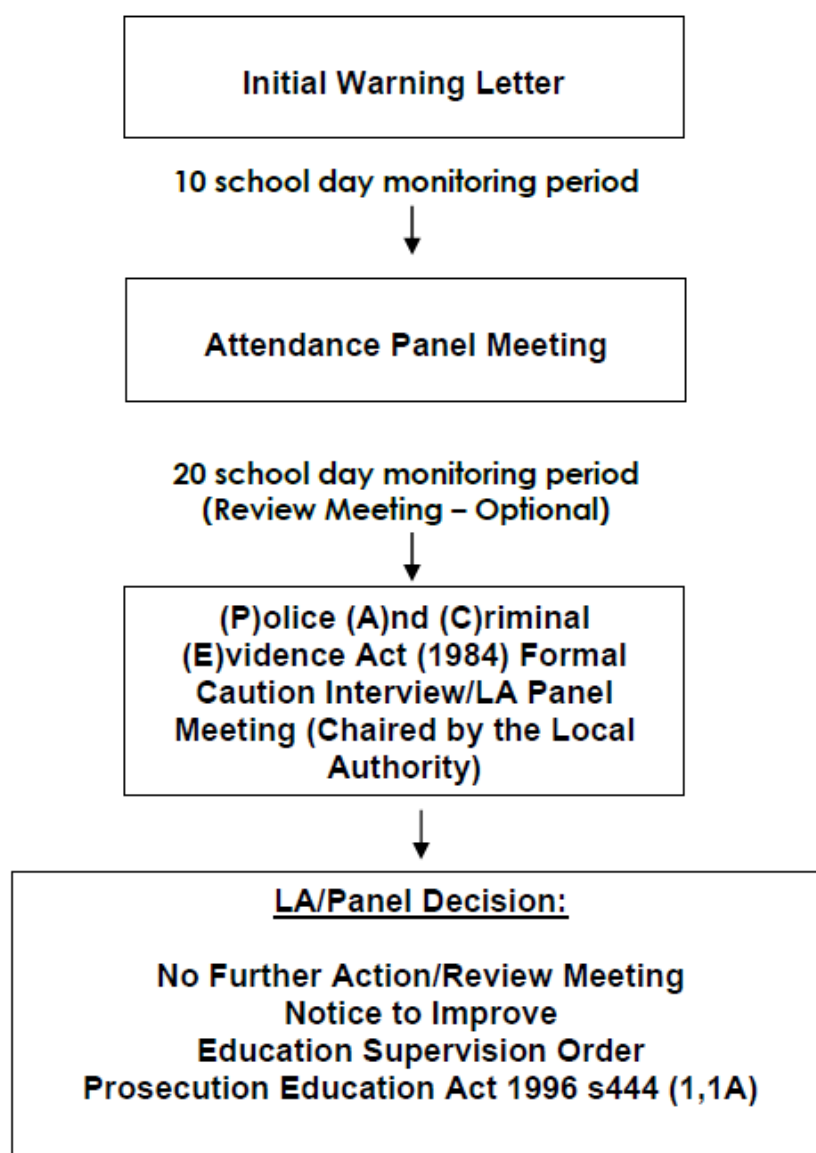
**We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement from their school first.**

## Appendix B – Flow Chart of Formal Prosecution Process



### Flow Chart of School/LA Attendance Procedure – Time restricted

The following procedure will be undertaken by the school should there be no significant improvement in your child's attendance and unauthorised absence continues to be recorded.



If at any stage in the above procedure your child's attendance improves significantly the school will not proceed to the following stage.

However, your child's attendance will continue to be monitored by the school and should there at any time in the future become further concerns the above procedure will be continued onto the next stage or recommenced from the first stage depending on the severity of the situation.

# Appendix C – List of Rewards

## Daily

- Child on time (before 0845am) – 1 daily dojo
- 100% class attendance – get a letter for academy name display on the door. If the class spell the word out, they get £10 for the class to spend.

## Weekly

- Weekly class winner announced on newsletter
- Juice and biscuits for whole week 100%ers

## Spontaneous – given by Head of Academy / Attendance Officer

- Additional dojos / treats given as incentives on key dates that have historically been poorly attended