



Attendance Policy

(Written in collaboration with Dovestone Learning Partnership)

Date written / reviewed	August 2024
Date of next review	August 2026
Headteacher	<i>R Hill</i>
Chair of Governors	<i>J Goodwin</i>

“A Family Committed to Making a Difference”

Rationale

Friezland Primary School believes that regular attendance is vital for all our pupils if they are to gain the most from the education we provide. There are clear documented links between regular attendance and positive attainment. Punctuality is also very important to ensure pupils get the most out of school. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late for school.

All young people have a right to an education. A child is of statutory school age between 5 and 16. Parents / Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually. If a child does not, Parents / Carers may be breaking the law.

At Friezland Primary School we aim for every child to have attendance of 100% and expect 97% or above. Children are expected to be on the playground ready for the start of the school day at 8:45am.

Roles & Responsibilities

The **Headteacher** in collaboration with the **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**, takes responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures. They are the key people who motivate and lead the staff by demonstrating a commitment to promoting good attendance by:

- Monitoring weekly attendance levels, half termly pupil percentages; making contact with families whose children’s attendance is at risk of falling below 90%.
- Being available for parents who may wish to discuss specific problems or in-school difficulties which their child is experiencing.
- Communicating with and reporting to the Local Authority on attendance matters and seeking relevant advice.
- Providing attendance reports to the Governing Board of the school.
- Providing information to governors, parents, the LA attendance officer and the DfE regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the school’s attendance policy and the associated in-school practices.

The **Governing Board** of the school is actively engaged in promoting good attendance at the school by supporting and encouraging pupils and teachers in their work. They achieve this by:

- Supporting staff in the development of a whole school approach to promoting good attendance.
- Supporting staff in setting up appropriate attendance targets for the whole school.
- Working with the Headteacher to monitor and evaluate attendance trends in the school.
- Delegating authority (if necessary) to the Headteacher to decide whether or not an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Class teachers are ideally placed because of their regular daily contact with pupils to assess whether the explanations received for a child’s absence or lateness are reasonable, or if the child is at an early stage in developing a pattern of absence. At Friezland, we recognise that building good relationships with pupils and their families, is vital in promoting good attendance.

Class Teachers will:

- Identify pupils who are beginning to develop, or have developed, a pattern of absence.
- Welcome pupils back after they have been absent due to illness.
- Where necessary, take specific steps to assist pupils and their families who are returning to school when they have been absent due to illness.
- Consistently check parents' explanations for their child's absence.
- Be a positive, active role model.
- Refer any concerns to the Headteacher.

We believe that all **pupils** should attend school regularly if we are to encourage them to reach their full potential. We encourage pupils to appreciate the importance of attending school regularly and on time, and to have a positive working attitude.

Pupils should:

- Aim for 100% attendance, only being absent through genuine reasons.
- If they arrive late, they must report to the school office to say that they have arrived in school and request they are marked in. An adult should accompany a child who is late.
- Not leave the school premises during the school day without permission and only when accompanied by an adult.

The school bell rings at **8:45am** when the children line up on the playground and are met by a member of staff. Children should be ready, in their classrooms, with the appropriate equipment by 8:50am when the register is taken. Any pupil arriving after **9:00am** without an authorised reason, is marked as late (**L**). The register closes at **9:30am**. After this time, the mark given will indicate that the pupil arrived after registration closed and unless a valid reason is given, will be given an unauthorised absence (**U**). It is parent and carers' responsibility to inform, school of their child's absence by 9.30am. In the event that pupils are absent and parents have not notified school, school will phone parents and carers using the contact details provided. If it is not possible to contact parents and carers to ensure the whereabouts of the pupil, the Headteacher or a member of the Safeguarding Team may carry out a home-visit to ensure the safety of the pupil.

Parents / Carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their child regularly attends school and arrives on time. We acknowledge that there are sometimes external factors which impact on good attendance and we aim to work proactively with families in order to identify and barriers and support strong attendance. If your child will be absent from school, we ask that you support and follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

The school operates an effective 'Keeping in Touch' procedure to monitor pupils' absence and class teachers regularly check the attendance of their class, and will follow up a pupil's absence with appropriate personnel in school or with the child's parents. Parents are expected to assist us in our work of raising and maintaining attendance levels throughout the school by:

- Ensuring the regular attendance of their child.
- Ensuring their child is punctual and arrives at school on time each day.

- Letting school know daily as soon as possible and, at the latest, by 9:00am if their child is/will be absent from school and the reason for the absence e.g. illness. For frequent and longer-term absences, a request may be made by the school for parents to produce a doctor's note.
- Attending any meetings about their child's attendance, which may be necessary.
- Reading and agreeing to the statements in the 'Home-School' agreement.

The issues of confidentiality and child protection underpin any issues regarding attendance. The school has a clear and explicit confidentiality policy that ensures good practice throughout the school which both pupils and parents should understand. It must be understood that teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality regarding attendance issues.

The Role of the School Administrator

The school administrator provides a great deal of valuable support for teaching staff in promoting attendance by:

- Operating the 'Keeping in touch' system and recording information received from parents at the school office especially: the reason for absence, identifying whether the absence is authorised or not and ensuring the correct code has been entered in the register.
- Liaising with class teachers about the foreseen and unforeseen absence of pupils.
- Making routine phone calls to parents about their child's absences if no reasons are known. If school is unable to make contact, the police may be contacted to establish the whereabouts of the child in-line with our Child Protection Policy.
- Providing the Headteacher with attendance statistics and other reports upon request, through the use of the School Information Management Systems (SIMS).
- Preparing any attendance data required by the Headteacher.

Strategies for Maintaining Good Attendance and Punctuality

The school actively promotes good attendance and punctuality through:

- Involving pupils in the formation of this and other school policies and documents, including the Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy, School Expectations and the Home-School Agreement contract.
- Pupils' current attendance is reported at parent's evenings, in end of year reports and through direct communication.
- The importance of pupils' attendance is regularly shared on parent newsletters, alongside the school target and latest cohort and whole school data.
- Working with individual families to identify and mitigate, where possible, barriers to good attendance and punctuality.
- Following LA guidance and issuing fines where appropriate.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Illness

The school acknowledges that children may have unavoidable absences due to illness. It is important that children are not sent to school when they are unwell, especially in the event of a stomach upset when we request that children are kept off for at least 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea. We

request that you inform school for each day of absence until your child returns unless there is a known isolation period / hospital advice given regarding length of absence. If patterns of absence emerge i.e. same day of week or longer than expected absence, school will request information to support the absence i.e. a prescription or appointment card. **We will not require a doctor's letter.**

Religious Observance

Requests for absence for religious observance should be made in writing to the Headteacher via the 'absence during term-time' application form. These will only be granted where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents belong.

Medical appointments

Medical and dental appointments should, wherever possible, be avoided during the school day in order to minimise disruption to the learning of the child and that of others pupils. Medical absence will usually be authorised although proof of the appointment may be requested by the school.

Term-time absences

If parents should wish to apply for a term-time absence then they will be required to complete a request form in advance, giving as much notice as possible.

It is very unlikely that a holiday will be granted in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances (examples may include **but are not limited to**: parents work in HM Forces or other sectors where annual leave is limited; the family has suffered a bereavement or has a member of family with a terminal illness).

The Headteacher will take into account the following factors when making their decision:

- The nature of the absence and how it contributes to the pupil's personal development.
- The pupil's attendance record including the amount of authorised / unauthorised absences already recorded.
- The pupil's current academic progress.
- The potential impact that the absence may have on academic progress.
- The potential impact that the absence could have on student wellbeing/welfare.
- The proximity of SATs and other such statutory assessments.
- The length of time requested.
- The frequency of such requests from the family.
- Any special mitigating circumstances.

Following a request for a leave of absence during term-time, school will respond in writing, stating the reasons for the decision made.

When an absence is authorised, if a child fails to return to school by the agreed return date, without good reason, subsequent days will be unauthorised and if no contact is made, the child's name may be removed from the school roll, with no guarantee of re-admission.

Only in **exceptional circumstances** will a pupil be granted leave of absence **exceeding 5 school days / 10 sessions** (1 day = 2 sessions). Such circumstances may include the following:

- Loss of passport
- Serious illness / accident to child or accompanying family member
- Death of a family member
- Missed or delayed flights
- War/civil unrest
- Severe weather conditions.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are categorised as unauthorised. Oldham LA considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs. It may well be one of the actions considered if a pupil does not return to school on the date specified in the request form. **A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.**

Unauthorised absences where a fixed penalty is considered appropriate include:

- Overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally condoned absences
- Unauthorised holidays/leave in term-time
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed at 9.30am)

The individual circumstances regarding the authorisation of an absence taken during term time will be considered by the Headteacher and on occasion, the Governing Board. Holiday absence requests will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and will usually be recorded as an unauthorised absence. **Unauthorised absences that accumulate to 10 sessions / 5 days within a rolling 10-week period can lead to a penalty charge being issued by the LA. From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.**

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500. Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

(See Oldham Penalty Notice Fines information in the appendices.)

Inclement Weather / closure at short-notice

We understand that there are times that it may be difficult for students to attend school due to inclement weather. Despite this, we will always endeavour to keep the school open for the pupils that can attend.

In the event of inclement weather, no heating / water/ gas, or damage caused to the site from extreme weather, the Headteacher (or SLT) will liaise with the Caretaker, assess the situation on site and make a decision as to whether the school is to close. The decision will be communicated to staff, pupils and their families via Eduspot texts / e-mails and will be posted on the school website.

Our aim will be to make a decision as early as possible and at least one hour prior to the scheduled opening time. Decisions will often take place on the day of closure to enable a decision that will result in students missing learning to be as informed as possible.

Our 'Snow / Extreme Weather' Policy should be read in conjunction with this policy and can be found on our school website.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Attendance Policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation changes. The Governing Board's Resource and Environment Committee will discuss matters relating to attendance at their termly meeting. The LA Attendance Officer will meet with the Headteacher termly, to discuss current issues, data and legislation.

Data Protection Statement

The procedures and practice created by this policy have been reviewed in the light of our Data Protection Policy. All data will be handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Data Audit for the Attendance Policy					
What?	Probable Content	Why?	Who?	Where?	When?
Pupil attendance data	Name D.O.B. Address Attendance data	Monitor a child's absence and identify next steps Well-Being of Your Child	All Staff (as necessary)	SIMS CPOMS HT data	Held on File throughout a child's time at school Key data is passed onto a new School when moving on Some data is archived until the child is 25 (e.g. SEND pupil)

As such, our assessment is that this policy:

Has Few / No Data Compliance Requirements	Has A Moderate Level of Data Compliance Requirements	Has a High Level of Data Compliance Requirements
	✓	

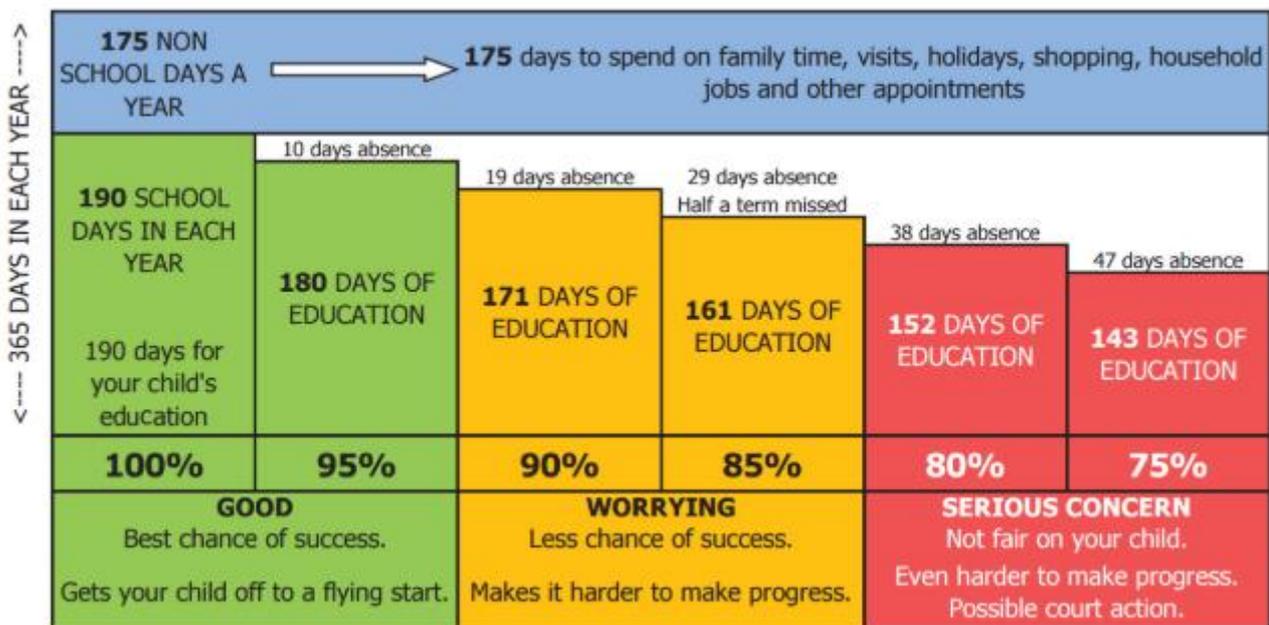
Appendices:

Every day and minute counts:

If you are late every day by 5 minutes, it adds up to over 3 days learning lost every year.

<i>Minutes Late</i>	<i>Days of Learning Lost</i>
5 Minutes	3.4 Days (98.4% Attendance)
10 Minutes	6.9 Days (97.6% Attendance)
15 Minutes	10.3 Days / 2 Weeks (94.7% Attendance)
20 Minutes	13.8 Days (92.9% Attendance)
30 Minutes	20.7 Days / 4 weeks (89.2% Attendance)

Be aware of how much learning time is lost with increasing numbers of days absent:





Application For School Absence During Term Time

Pupils attend school for 190 days each academic year. Friezland Primary School believes that regular attendance is vital for all pupils if they are to gain the most from the education we provide. There are clearly documented links between regular attendance and attainment. **At Friezland Primary School we expect every child to have attendance of 97% or above.** All young people have a right to an education. A child is of statutory school age between 5 and 16. Parents / carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually. If a child does not, parents / carers may be breaking the law.

The individual circumstances regarding the authorisation of an absence taken during term time will be considered by the Headteacher and on occasion, the Governing Board. Holiday absence requests will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and will usually be recorded as an unauthorised absence. **Unauthorised absences that accumulate to 10 sessions / 5 days within a rolling 10-week period can lead to a penalty charge being issued by the LA. From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.**

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500. Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

If you wish to make an application for absence from school during term time, please complete the details below and return the form to school at least **four weeks** before the intended absence unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. bereavement. You will receive written notification regarding the outcome of your request within 10 working days of receipt.

Childs full name:	
Date of Birth:	Year group:
Name of Parent / Carer 1:	Name of Parent / Carer 2:
Full address:	Emergency contact number:
Reason for absence request:	
Date of first day of absence:	Date due back in school:
Number of absent school days:	
Signed:	Print name:
Date:	



Application For School Absence During Term Time

SCHOOL SECTION

Date request received by school	
Pupil(s) who will be absent	
Total number of absent school days	
Reason for absence	
Authorised absence	State why (e.g. exceptional circumstances: bereavement, serious illness etc.)
Unauthorised absence	State why (e.g. not exceptional)
Number of any previous absences this current academic year (authorised & unauthorised)	
Any further details requested e.g. medical note / travel itinerary	
Signed Headteacher Date	
Signed Office Administrator Date	
Date written notification sent to parent / carer	

Authorised absence communication:

XX.XX.XX

Parent / Guardian of: **XXX**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Further to your application for school absence during term time, I am able to authorise the absence requested for **XXX to XXX**, as the circumstances are deemed as exceptional.

The absence will be recorded as **authorised** in our attendance records.

Any future requests of a similar nature are likely to be unauthorised.

Yours sincerely,

Miss R Hill

Unauthorised absence communication:

XX.XX.XX

Parent / Guardian of: **XXX**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for your application for school absence during term time in order to **XXX**.

On this occasion, we are unfortunately unable to authorise the absence requested for **XXX to XXX**, as the circumstances are not classed as exceptional.

The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** in our attendance records.

Yours sincerely,

Miss R Hill

Absence monitoring communications

Letter 1: cause for concern/close monitoring

XX.XX.XX

Dear X

I am writing to alert you to your child's current attendance data. X's attendance is now at X% as a result of having X sessions of absence between X and X.

At this stage I am making contact to share my concerns and to ask that you work in partnership with school to minimise any further absences this academic year.

As a school we work with families to support with attendance concerns to ensure we remove any barriers to learning. Any student missing more than 12 sessions (6 days) in a school year will have their progress hindered, which will ultimately affect their attainment.

If you require any further information regarding our Attendance Policy please see our school website.

If you require any support from school or wish to discuss the contents of the letter further, please contact school at your earliest convenience in order to speak with me.

Kind regards,

Miss R Hill

Letter 2: further action

XX.XX.XX

Dear X

Further to my previous correspondence, I am writing to alert you to your child's current attendance data. X's attendance is now at X% as a result of having X sessions of absence between X and X.

We now need to arrange a meeting to discuss the matter in person and I will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient date and time. At the meeting, as well as ourselves, a school Governor will also be present. I have also had to alert the Oldham LA Attendance Team and inform our attendance officer.

As you will be aware, significant absence can result in parents receiving fixed-penalty fines and the LA instigating legal action. I am hopeful that working together, we can improve attendance outcomes for your child and avoid any further action.

If you require any further information regarding our Attendance Policy please see our school website.

Kind regards,

Miss R Hill



Home-School Agreement

Friezland's Mission Statement

'A Family Committed to Making a Difference'

The Friezland Vision

We will develop well-rounded, resilient individuals who demonstrate mutual respect and tolerance and who have a positive impact on their community and the wider world.

Aims:

We will fulfil our vision by:

- **achieving** excellence through collaboration and exploration;
- **providing** a diverse and inclusive learning community where uniqueness is celebrated and through which children, families, staff and Governors work in partnership to nurture, grow and unlock every child's potential;
- **knowing** each child well to make sure that they feel valued, encouraging their self-esteem and confidence to grow;
- **educating** to the highest standards and developing skills for life through ensuring exciting, challenging and stimulating experiences within and beyond the classroom, to maximise achievement and success;
- **developing** curiosity and the courage to think critically and ambitiously;
- **exploring** and **investigating** independently and interdependently;
- **encouraging** a life-long love of learning which is exemplified by children who enjoy challenge and are motivated to take risks;
- **facilitating** a programme of enrichment to build confidence and promote new interests, teamwork, leadership skills, friendships and fun.

The school will support children to:

- achieve their full potential and aspirations;
- fulfil the Friezland Expectations;
- respect and care for their resources and learning environment;
- experience a range of social, moral, spiritual and cultural opportunities;
- treat everyone equally and fairly;
- understand that we are all individuals and should be valued as such and
- understand and value diversity.

The school will also:

- create an environment which is conducive to learning;
- offer a broad and balanced curriculum and
- work in partnership with parents and the wider community.



Friezland Expectations

All children and adults will aim to meet the Friezland Expectations. They will:

- **be respectful** (appreciate people and things and be kind and considerate);
- **be in the right place at the right time** (arrive on time for school, be in the classroom, playground or hall when they should be);
- **choose safe behaviour** (keeping themselves and others safe);
- **handle their emotions appropriately** (discuss matters calmly, solve the root problem rather than focusing on the behaviour);
- **co-operate** (work together);
- **use friendly language** (verbal and body language) and
- **do their best** (to have a positive attitude to learning and make the right choices with their school work).



The family will support their child's education by:

- talking to school staff if they have a query or concern about their child;
- working in partnership with the school and other appropriate agencies;
- supporting the development of our Friezland Expectations and supporting school if their child fails to meet our Expectations;
- ensuring their child arrives at school on time and is collected on time;
- sending their child to school every day that they are well enough to attend and informing school when they are not;
- endeavouring to adhere to the school uniform and PE kit policy;
- supporting their child with home-learning tasks;
- supporting the school to identify, celebrate and develop a child's talents and skills and
- using social networking sites safely and appropriately when discussing school life and not making negative comments about school, staff or children at Friezland.





Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance have changed

from 19th August 2024

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by the DfE, the following changes have come into force for School Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence.

The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

Please note: The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.



Second Offence (within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.



Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in Criminal records and fines of up to £2,500

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Per Parent*, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent*, for each child that was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

*Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" as:

- All natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.