# SIR THOMAS FREMANTLE SCHOOL

# Attendance Policy
## 2021/2022

This policy is updated and approved by the Governing Body every year

This version was approved March 22

The next review will be Sept 2022

Approved: Mrs S Driscoll – Chair of Governors

Approved: Mr N. Pledger – Headteacher

*Signed copy held in school*

# Contents

## 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. We understand the value and positive impact of good attendance at school, as well as the negative impact and possible safeguarding implications of poor attendance. We will support parents in reviewing attendance every three weeks and communicating promptly about any concerns; to inform, clarify and alert parents as necessary and to invite further necessary or helpful communication.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

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. School procedures

### 3.1 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.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Unable to attend due to Covid-19 restrictions/guidance.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Please see appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 08.30 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.35 and will be kept open until 8.55. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.40pm and will be kept open until 2.35pm.

### 3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 08.30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

**You can notify reception by phone on 01296 711853 or via email at receptionist@sirthomasfremantle.org**

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.

### 3.3 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 outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

To notify the school in advance about such appointments, contact reception and the form tutor, 'Learning Lead' and/or Attendance Lead in all cases, reception must be informed.

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

### 3.4 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.

Any student who is identified as frequently arriving late to school or lessons may be made subject to attendance/punctuality reports and/or other supportive strategies to facilitate improvement.

### 3.5 Following up absence

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.

### 3.6 Reporting to parents

The school will notify parents whose children have below-95% attendance at the first collection of such data, and thereafter dependent upon improvement and/or decline in attendance data. The school will regularly review this data and communicate further as necessary to facilitate an improvement. All reporting to parents will be done via Class charts and will include a letter to support dependent on the stage of intervention required.

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers 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's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

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

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


### 4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools 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 decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, 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.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school recognises and values the importance and positive impact of good attendance, and the direct correlation between good attendance and positive outcomes for young people – pastorally as well as academically. The school regularly monitors both good and worrying attendance records. Half-termly, students are rewarded for 100% attendance via Classcharts and their form tutor. Throughout the year, other rewards are also granted for excellent attendance records.

The school wishes to work with parents to support regular attendance – for example, communicating early about issues, acknowledging positive improvements, indicating a named contact in school, etc.

## 6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence formally on a twice per half term basis.

Parents are expected to call 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 call the school again for every day of their child's absence.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5%, we will contact the parents to ascertain the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will implement strategies and interventions with the family and consider involving an education welfare officer (the county attendance team).  All interventions will be formally communicated with the parents via Classcharts and a letter.

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.

## 7. Roles and responsibilities

### 7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher 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 also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### 7.3 The attendance officer (Leah Martindale)

The attendance officer:
- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Enables communication between parents and the school to discuss attendance issues –
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### 7.4 Class teachers/form tutors/ Learning Leads

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Form tutors are the first port of call in identifying, flagging and communicating about poor attendance and rewarding good attendance on Classcharts. Learning Leads will work with form tutors and parents to offer support in improving attendance. Learning Leads issue letters to parents (stage 1→5) and report to the Attendance Officer each half term regarding interventions and strategies.

### 7.5 Office/reception staff

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

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the attendance officer. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---|---|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| J | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| P | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| W | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---|---|---|
| **Authorised absence** | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| **Unauthorised absence** | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-----------|----------|
| **X** | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| **Y** | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| **Z** | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| **#** | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |