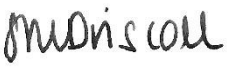
Attendance Policy

NAMED PERSON	Kayleigh Shaw
ATTACHED COMMITTEE	Full Governing Body

LAST REVIEW DATE	February 2023
REVIEW CYCLE	1 Year
NEXT REVIEW DATE	February 2024

Mrs S Driscoll – Chair of Governors	**Mr F Murphy – Head Teacher**
Signed: 	**Signed:**
Date: 28.02.23	**Date: 28.02.23**

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- The promotion and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- 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 any pandemic restrictions or 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 I* 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 1pm and will be kept open until 2pm.

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 absence@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

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. **We ask for notification of these through reception by phone on 01296 711853 or via email at absence@sirthomasfremantle.org**

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible to minimise time out of school. 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, please notify through the absence email as above.

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 "L".

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 and punctuality reports. In addition to this, other supportive strategies may be required 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.

Below outlines the day-to-day processes on following up daily absences:

- On the day of absence, if the school has not been notified before 9am, parents/carers will be notified via text alerts to notify and contact the school
- If no response from the parents/carers by 10am contact will be made to follow up a reason for absence.
- If no associated contacts that are listed can be reached, the school will follow appropriate measures in line with "Children Missing in Education" and ahere to the Buckinghamshire County Council processes.
- Contact will be made each day of absence to ensure where necessary appropriate safeguarding action is taken.
- If absence continues, the county attendance team will be notified

3.6 Reporting to parents

The school will notify all parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through their termly reports. In addition to this, parents whose children falling below the expected attendance level will receive additional communication.

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. Our attendance strategy flowchart to support the communication with parents is found in *Appendix II* of this policy.

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

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

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. Through intervals across the year students will be rewarded for good (above 95%) and Perfect

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 and reviewing

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence formally during our cycles as outlined in the flowchart (See Appendix II)

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.

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.

All our monitoring and contact with parents and carers regarding attendance is centrally logged within CPOMS..

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 throughout the year.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

7.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

7.3 The Attendance Officer

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Proactively managing lateness and set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent.
- Expect parents to contact the school when their child is absent to explain the reason and put in place processes to contact parents on the first day of absence where a reason has not been provided. If absence continues without explanation, further contact should be made to ensure safeguarding (a home visit should be considered)
- Identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents (and where appropriate foster carers and/or social workers) to understand why and when the pupil will return.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. Schools should avoid headline percentages and instead make this understandable for parents.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps

7.4 The Assistant Head

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Liaising with the attendance officer meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Signposting targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Kayleigh Shaw and can be contacted via kayleigh.shaw@sirthomasfremantle.org

7.5 Other members of staff

- All staff have a responsibility to maintain high standards of attendance
- All staff to adhere to the procedures outlined in our attendance policy and structure
- Director of Learning Leads will liaise with the attendance officer and assistant head to devise strategies to support individual students with poor attendance and manage meetings with parents accordingly. They will also work with their team of learning leads to manage and promote additional strategies to monitor and improve attendance
- Learning Leads to communicate with parents and tutors and identify and address any pastoral issues which may be the cause of poor attendance
- Form Tutors are the first port of call in identifying, flagging and communicating about poor attendance and rewarding good attendance through our ClassCharts system.
- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office
- Office Staff will receive calls and emails from parents about absence and update our MIS accordingly to reflect this.

8. Updates and Links with other policies

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

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix I: 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

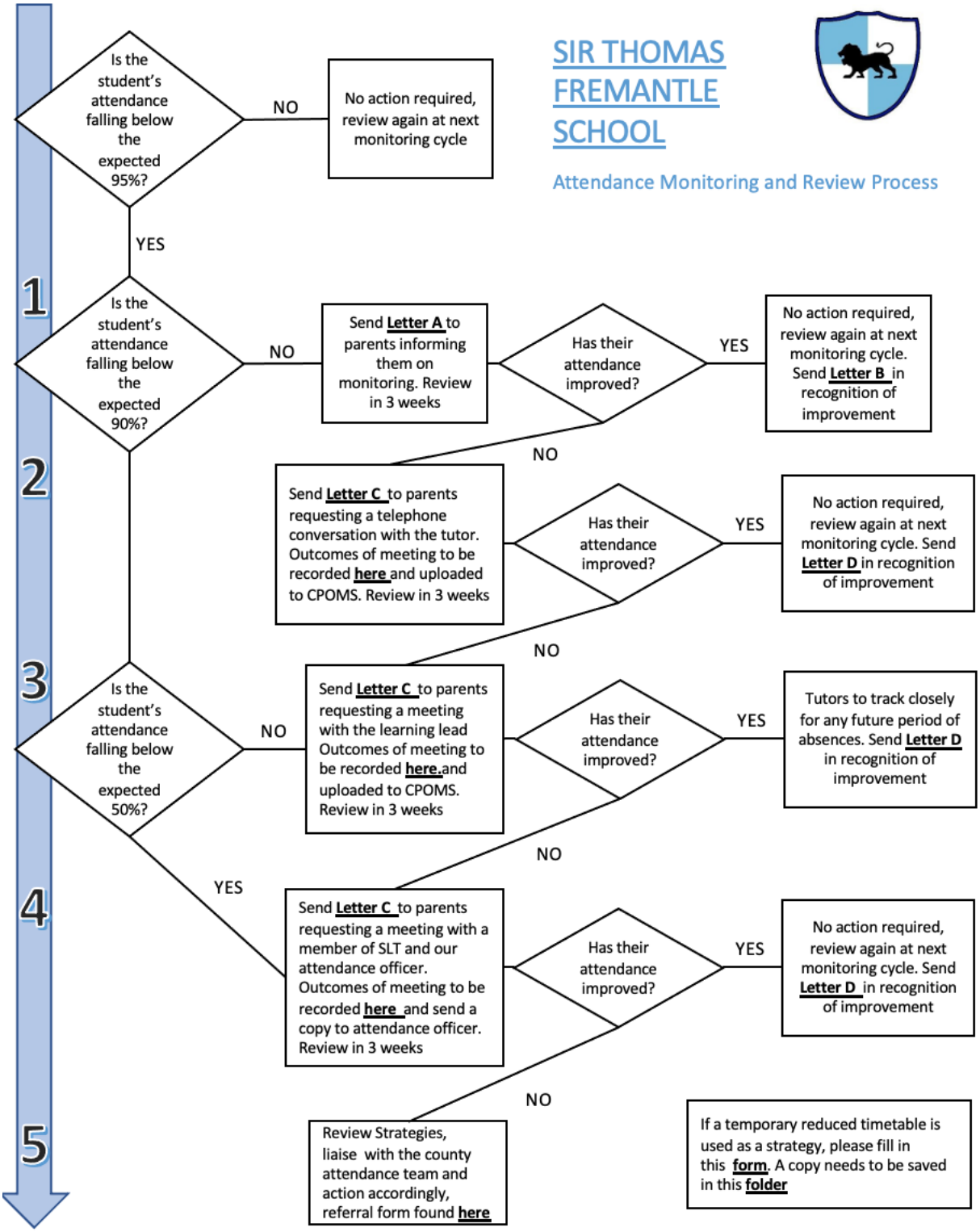
Absence Codes:

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

Other codes:

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

Appendix II: Flowchart of Attendance Monitoring

For the purpose of this policy, this is reference only and therefore the links associated with this document are not hyperlinked to the policy due to their location.