

<b>Title and Description</b>	<b>Attendance Policy</b>
<b>Date of last review</b>	March 2024
<b>Approved by</b>	Local Governing Board
<b>To be reviewed by</b>	Local Governing Board
<b>Responsibility</b>	Deputy Headteacher
<b>Review period</b>	Annually
<b>Date of next review</b>	March 2025

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### 1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- i. Develop a framework that makes clear the role of all stakeholders in promoting excellent attendance and punctuality
- ii. Provide clear guidelines for students and parents/carers on what constitutes excellent attendance and punctuality
- iii. Outline the measures and support we will put in place to promote excellent attendance and punctuality in school
- iv. Support the ethos and values of the school
- v. Apply to students in Years 7 to 11

### Framwellgate School Durham: Ethos and Values Statement

#### Excellence, Compassion and Respect for All

Our school promotes academic excellence and embraces the shared values of honesty, integrity, respect and compassion. We want our students to be ambitious, kind, resilient and hardworking, and have a genuine passion for learning. We want them to change the world with the knowledge, skills and confidence they have learned here; to champion fairness, have friendships for life, and pride in our school. Above all, we want our students to be happy.

#### British Values

All staff are expected to uphold and promote fundamental British Values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

### 2. Relevant policies and publications

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:

- 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 \(Student Registration\) \(England\) 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. Principles

The principles underpinning our approach to attendance are:

- i. That it is crucial in raising standards and ensuring that all students can fulfil their potential
- ii. That school is pivotal in enabling students to develop friendships and social skills

- iii. That it enables students to develop good routines from an early age and prepare them for the world of work

#### **4. Features of Schools that Promote Excellent Attendance**

Schools that promote strong attendance offer a clear vision for attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, students and families. These high expectations are supported by clear procedures and robust monitoring processes. Framwellgate School Durham's attendance and pastoral teams have clearly defined roles and implement these effectively to ensure that we safeguard all our young people and demonstrate a duty of care to all in our charge.

#### **5. Barriers to Attendance**

Barriers to attendance are usually complex and unique to each individual, but they may include the following:

- Medical issues
- Emotional health
- Disengagement with education
- Chaotic homelife
- Separation anxieties
- Transport issues
- Financial difficulties
- Parenting styles (the parent acts more like a friend and doesn't enforce boundaries)
- Friendship issues

#### **6. Ensuring consistency with regard to attendance**

We expect all students to attend school regularly and be on time.

##### The Role of Students

Students, wherever possible, attend school every day and on time. They are also responsible for ensuring that they attend all lessons on time.

##### The Role of Parents/Carers

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure their child goes to school or receives an appropriate education. If a child is sick or unable to attend, parents/carers must call the school telephone number (0191 386 6628 Option 1) before 8.30 am each day of absence. Parents/carers can also report an absence using the Class Charts app. Parents and carers are expected to work closely with the school to discuss any barriers to attendance and seek positive solutions to ensure their children can attend every day.

##### The Role of the School

To help parents or carers fulfil their legal duty to ensure their children attend school, school will make clear the times for start of each day and the expectations regarding lateness and absence. School will also make clear to them in writing the school term dates, and any additional days when a student is not expected to attend school (e.g. professional training days).

The school will contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence where no contact has been made and on occasions when the absence is a particular cause for concern. From the second day of absence the parents/carers should expect a phone call from the year team. From the third day of absence school will instigate a home visit by a member of the pastoral team or Family Liaison Manager wherever possible. Every subsequent day of absence after this will be followed up by a telephone call to discuss barriers to attendance and any support that can be given. The only legally acceptable reasons for not being in school are illness and medical appointments (and the latter only if it is not possible to arrange these outside of school times). Other absences may be approved by the school, such as dates of religious observance. Wherever possible medical/other appointments should be made for times outside of the school day. The

school will not authorise any absence due to family holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any parents/carers taking children out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Headteacher may be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

School will work closely with parents/carers to support any children who find it difficult to attend school. They will employ strategies of support such as deployment of our Family Liaison Manager and Emotional Wellbeing Worker. School will also work closely with the Local Authority's Attendance Improvement Team to explore any cases where attendance does not improve and there are no good reasons for the absences, or if parents/carers do not accept the help and support offered. Enforcement action may also be considered.

Class teachers and tutors are responsible for recording attendance daily using the correct codes and ensuring that any children missing from class are reported to the Attendance Improvement Co-ordinator.

The Attendance Improvement Co-ordinator and admin staff will take phone calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on the relevant school systems. The Attendance Improvement Co-ordinator will liaise with the local authority to issue fixed penalty notices where they are required and liaise closely with the local authority's Attendance Improvement Team to pursue persistent non-attendance.

The Family Liaison Manager (FLM) will work closely with hard to engage families to provide a supportive package to ensure students attend school, regularly. The FLM will also work closely with the local authority's Attendance Improvement Team to pursue persistent non-attendance.

In addition, we recognise the importance of recognising and rewarding students who have good attendance and also those who improve their attendance. This will be done through points awarded on Class Charts weekly and half termly attendance prize draws.

### The Role of the Governing Board

The Local Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school at regular intervals at Personal Development, Behaviour and Attendance subcommittee meetings. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### The Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will ensure that this policy is implemented and monitor school level absence data to report to governors.

## **7. Recording Attendance**

We will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day, during every lesson and again for the afternoon session of school. The register will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

## **8. Unplanned Absence**

A student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible. We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as

unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance. **It is the school which decides whether an absence can or cannot be authorised.**

## 9. Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. If an appointment is in the morning for example, the student will be expected to return for the afternoon session. The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision.

## 10. Following up Absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on the absence with the parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by making telephone contact with parents/carers and initiating a home visit on the third day of absence whenever this is practicably possible
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use
- Work with parents/carers to remove barriers to attendance

## 11. Legal Sanctions

The school will work closely with the local authority Attendance Improvement Team to issue fixed penalty notices for unauthorised holidays and consider court proceedings for persistent non-attendance.

## 12. Punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Students who are late to school (or lesson) will attend a lunchtime detention every time they accumulate three late marks. Failure to attend this could lead to a 2 hour after-school senior leadership detention.

### 13. Attendance Zones

Below are the coloured attendance zones which indicate good and poor attendance. Students and parents or carers can check attendance levels at any time through the Class Charts app.

Universal support offered to all students:

- Regular reminders of the importance of good attendance, through assemblies, tutors and Class Charts.
- Attendance update shown on Class Charts
- Weekly attendance rewards
- Half termly rewards voucher draw
- Second day of absence phone calls
- Third day of absence home visit

Colour Coding	% Attendance	What can you/your child expect?
<b>Gold</b>	<b>Excellent</b> <b>100 - 98%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal support offered to all students (above)</li> </ul>
<b>Green</b>	<b>Very good</b> <b>97.9 - 96%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal support offered to all students (above)</li> </ul>
<b>Blue</b>	<b>Good/ Satisfactory</b> <b>95.9 - 94%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal support offered to all students (above)</li> <li>• The student is highlighted by Attendance Improvement Co-ordinator when attendance drops below 96% with unauthorised absences.</li> <li>• An appropriate member of staff (usually Pastoral Manager) will have an informal discussion with the student to explore whether they have any concerns or issues that could be a barrier to attendance.</li> <li>• Stage 1 reminder letter sent home to parents/carers which highlights the importance of good attendance and invites parents to discuss any concerns if they wish to do so – this is done through SIMS and Class Charts.</li> </ul>
<b>Orange</b>	<b>Caution!</b> <b>93.9 - 92%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal support offered to all students (above)</li> <li>• Second warning letter issued to parents/carers (stage 2) if continued unexplained or unauthorised absences despite support offered – through SIMS and Class Charts.</li> <li>• Parents/carers requested to attend a meeting in school to discuss attendance and any strategies that need to be in place.</li> </ul>
<b>Yellow</b>	<b>Warning</b> <b>91.9 - 90%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal support offered to all students (above)</li> <li>• Stage 3 letter issued if continued unexplained or unauthorised absences despite support offered. Parents/carers informed their child is at risk of becoming a persistent absentee.</li> <li>• Request for parents/carers to meet with the Year Team, Assistant Headteacher or the Family Liaison Manager to discuss support/intervention.</li> <li>• Attendance support plan initiated if continued unexplained or unauthorised absence- support will be offered in line with this plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Red</b>	<b>Serious Concern (known as Persistent Absenteeism)</b> <b>Below 90%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal support offered to all students (above)</li> <li>• Parental meeting in school or home with Family Liaison Manager.</li> <li>• Attendance support plan reviewed. During the attendance plan review, those involved will identify whether any additional support could be offered by the school or partner agencies.</li> <li>• Warning that improvement is needed or there will be a referral made to the local authority Attendance Improvement Team. This will be done through the Family Liaison Manager.</li> </ul>

## 14. Persistent Absenteeism

Persistent absence is where a student has an attendance figure of 90% or below. Missing school will make a child fall behind in lessons and will impact on academic progress and achievement. School takes persistent absence very seriously and will therefore monitor PA (persistent absentee) groups closely and set up meetings with parents/carers of any students whose attendance is at this level.

HOW MANY DAYS OFF WILL MAKE A CHILD A PERSISTENT ABSENCE STUDENT?	
Half-term 1	3 ½ days off school from September until October half-term holiday will make a child a PA student.
Half-term 1-2	7 days off school from September until the Christmas holiday will make a child a PA student.
Half term 1-3	10 days of absence from September until February half-term will make a child a PA student.
Half term 1-4	12 ½ days of absence from September until the Easter holidays will make a child a PA student.
Half-term 1-5	15 ½ days of absence from September until May half-term will make a child a PA student.
Half-term 1-6	19 days of absence for the full academic year (September to end of summer term in July) will make a child a PA student.

## 15. Severe Absenteeism

Severe absence is where a student has an attendance figure of 50% or below. Students in this category will have had a Student Support Plan completed, parental meetings in school and other agencies notified where needed. Where the parents or carers are not engaging in support and there is no improvement students will be referred to the local authority's Attendance Improvement Team (AIT).

## 16. Child Missing from Education (CME)

Where the school identifies a possible missing student, school staff will commence checks with emergency contact numbers held and conduct home visits to establish whether the family has moved away. If there are safeguarding concerns connected with the missing child, the school will inform the child's social worker or contact First Contact. School staff will also relevant staff at the local authority and will also complete a CME notification form and send to [missingeducation@durham.gov.uk](mailto:missingeducation@durham.gov.uk). If a student is located and has transferred schools, the student can be removed from the school roll. If the local authority cannot locate the child after 20 days, the student can then be removed from the school roll.

## 17. Home Education

Whilst it is a parent's right and responsibility to home educate their child, if they so wish, Framwellgate School Durham will work closely with parents/carers to make sure that this choice is a last resort and that all other options to keep the child in school have been discussed and explored. Should a parent/carer still wish to pursue home education the procedure is as follows:

- Parent/carer will notify the school in writing
- The Pastoral Team will contact the family to ensure one final time that this is the right route
- The school will complete the local authority 'Elective Home Education' form
- School will remove the student from roll from the date of parental notification

### 18. Strategies to Improve Attendance

School staff will employ a range of strategies to improve attendance that are bespoke to the individual child and circumstances. These may include the following:

- Parental phone calls home on first day of absence
- Home Visits on the second day of absence
- Parental meetings to discuss barriers to attendance
- Access to the Pastoral team to discuss how they can support students and parents
- End of half term prize draws for 'gold zone' attendance
- Support of our Family Liaison Manager to explore barriers to attendance
- Weekly attendance reports to parents/carers on Class Charts
- Weekly attendance updates to students on Class Charts
- Access to our Emotional Wellbeing Worker for students who may be struggling with anxiety
- Discussion about referral to external agencies such as CAMHS for additional support
- Involvement of the local authority attendance Improvement Team

### 19. Attendance Codes

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



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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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 student is in custody



<b>Z</b>	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/CPD day