



Children's



Endeavour



Trust

Freeman Community Primary School

Attendance Policy

Document Control

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Children's Endeavour Trust and Freeman Community Primary School acknowledge there are clear links between:

- Attendance and attainment
- Attendance and safeguarding

1.2 Freeman Community Primary School is committed to providing a high-quality education for all its' pupils. By attending school every day and on time children and young people can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

1.3 The whole school community of Freeman Community Primary School – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility to ensure good school attendance and all have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

1.4 This policy applies to all children registered at and Freeman Community Primary School and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. and Freeman Community Primary School will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

1.5 Freeman Community Primary School encourage all parents/carers to work in partnership with the schools in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that ***“parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly”***.

1.6 Freeman Community Primary School uses the Local Authority recommended attendance codes (appendix 1).

2. Aims & Objectives

2.1 This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

2.2 Throughout this policy Freeman Community Primary School aims to:

- Ensure every child is safeguarded and their right to education protected

- To improve pupils' achievement by promoting high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve 100% for all pupils, apart from those with acute or chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to non-statutory school age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- To make explicit registration procedures.

3. Registration Procedures

3.1 Registration is an important part of the school day. Freeman Community Primary School acknowledges that attendance registers are legal documents, may be presented as evidence in a Court of Law; therefore, all staff undertake to mark registers accurately at all times.

3.2 Morning registration is viewed as a time to welcome pupils into school and help prepare them for the day ahead, as well as an opportunity to explain any changes to the day's usual routines.

3.3 Registers at Freeman Community Primary School are taken at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. For precise timings please see appendix 2 (Key Information for Parents).

3.4 Freeman Community Primary School attendance registers are available for inspection by authorised personnel during normal school hours.

4. School Responsibilities

4.1 All staff place a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

4.2 Staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have good attendance by:

Ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately;

Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence – only the school can decide whether the parent’s explanation justifies authorising the absence);

- responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care;
- contacting parents when they are concerned about a pupil’s absences, and recording the contact;
- consulting with the Education Welfare Service if a pupil’s attendance continues to give cause for concern;
- promoting regular school attendance (for example, by contacting parents on the first day of absence if parents have not contacted the school and informing parents each term of their child’s % attendance);
- acknowledging good or improved attendance of individual pupils and classes.

5. Responsibility of Parents/Carers

5.1 Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- Be aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure regular attendance
- Ensure their child arrives punctually and prepared for the school day
- Arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours

Punctuality

5.2 It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure that their children arrive to school on time. Appendix 2 (Key Information for Parents) outlines the times children are expected to be at school.

Absences

5.3 It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence as soon as is possible. Appendix 2 (Key Information for Parents) details the arrangements for Freeman Community Primary School.
- To provide medical evidence, if requested, on the child's return to school.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer. Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted

5.4 Illness/Medical Absences

In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc.

In the case of a chronic illness or other long term illness issue, then a letter or note from the GP or other health professional to state the child is not fit for school or stating the times and days each week the child will be fit for school will be required. This will give clarity to both the school and the child, plus the parent/carer.

The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday or if the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.

6. Term-Time Holiday Absences

6.1 Parents/carers are expected to take their child(ren) on holiday during the 14 weeks school holidays to minimise the impact of their child(ren) missing their education.

6.2 Parents/carers requesting a term time holiday must complete a leave of absence request form (appendix 3) in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office.
- To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).

7. Fixed Penalty Fines & Court

7.1 A fixed penalty notice fine will be issued when 7 or more unauthorised absence sessions (not necessarily consecutively) have occurred (3.5 whole days in total).

7.2 If parents/carers choose to take their child(ren) on a term-time holiday without the Headteacher's authorisation, the child(ren)'s absences will be marked as unauthorised.

7.3 The penalty notice fine is £60 if paid within 21 days; please note this is £60 for each child, for each parent/carer (i.e. 2 children, 2 parent/carers = £240 fine) increasing to £120 between 21 and 28 days.

Second and subsequent unauthorised term-time holidays may be referred to the Local Authority for legal action. In these cases an Education Welfare Officer will be asked to investigate and will decide with the school what the best course of action should be.

8. Absence for Other Reasons

8.1 It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.
- To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

Unexplained Absence

8.2 When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

8.3 Regular monitoring of all pupil's attendance is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

9. Role of the Education Welfare Officer

9.1 To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.

9.2 To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.

9.3 To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Attendance Service.

10. Persistent Latecomers

10.1 Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after the register has closed are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures.

10.2 Children who repeatedly attend school late will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. For precise timings please see appendix 2 (Key Information for Parents). **Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose child is persistently late and has missed at least 9 sessions due to unauthorised lateness in a school term.** The Education Welfare Officer may invite parents to attend a meeting in school to discuss the persistent lateness, this may be following or instead of the issue of a fixed penalty fine.

Appendix 1: Local Authority Recommended Attendance Codes

Ref code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	App Ed Act	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances - HT authority	Auth Ab	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration	App Ed Act	Out for whole session
E	Excluded	Auth Ab	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Auth Ab	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in	Unauth Ab	Out for whole session
H	Annual family holiday (agreed)	Auth Ab	Out for whole session
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Auth Ab	Out for whole session
J	Interview	App Ed Act	Out for whole session
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointment	Auth Ab	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauth Ab	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised circumstances	Unauth Ab	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	App Ed Act	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Auth Ab	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Auth Ab	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Auth Ab	Out for whole session
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauth Ab	Late for session
V	Educational visit	App Ed Act	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	App Ed Act	Out for whole session
#	School closed to children & staff	Att Not Req	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Att Not Req	Out for whole session
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Att Not Req	Out for whole session
Z	Pupil not on roll	Att Not Req	Out for whole session
-	All should attend / No mark recorded	No mark	No mark for session
@	DO NOT USE	Unauth Ab	No mark for session

App Ed Act - Approved Educational Activity
Auth Ab - Authorised Absence
Unauth Ab - Unauthorised Absence

Appendix 2: Key Information for Parents

Registration Timings

Morning Arrangements

At the start of the day	8.30am when the playground gates open.
The morning register is called at:	8.40am
A pupil will get a late mark after:	8.45am
A pupil will get an unauthorised absence after:	8.50am

Afternoon Arrangements

The afternoon register is called in key stage 1 at:	1pm
The afternoon register is called in key stage 2 at:	1.15pm
A pupil will get a late mark after:	1.05pm / 1.20pm
A pupil will get an unauthorised absence after:	1.10pm/1.25pm

How to report absence

On the first day of absence it is important you let the school know before 9am.	9am Call: 01449/612067
On the second (and every following) day of absence	9am Call: 01449/612067

If you do not contact us, we will endeavour to phone or text you. If we do not receive a communication from you then we require written explanation on your child's return to school. If the explanation is unsatisfactory or we do not receive a communication from you, we will not authorise

the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report. If the school receives no communication from parents within two days, the matter will be referred to Educational Welfare Officer.

Reasons for Absence

Acceptable	Unacceptable
Illness Emergency medical/dental appointments (please make routine appointments after school or in the school holidays) Days of religious observance Family bereavement	Day trips Visiting relatives Shopping Birthdays Looking after siblings

Encouraging my child to attend school

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's Class Teacher, the Family Liaison/Support Officer or the SENDCo immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons and it is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer, the Family Liaison/Support Officer or the School Nurse. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.

Appendix 3: Absence Requests Information and Form

Head teachers have been given the following directive by the Suffolk Director for Children & Young People, regarding requests for holiday/absence during term time.

Schools will consider every application individually; its policy is **NOT** to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances.

Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**.

Schools **will consider** authorising holidays for:

- Service personnel on return from deployment and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays other than during term-time.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis e.g. bereavement.

- Leave of Absence will not be granted on an annual basis.

Requests for holidays for the following reasons will **not** be authorised:

- Cheaper cost of holiday.
- Availability of the desired accommodation.
- Poor weather experienced in the school holiday periods.
- Overlap with beginning or end of term.

Schools will **NOT** authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS

The Education Attendance Service, on behalf of Children Endeavour Trust's Schools, will be issuing fixed penalty notice fines in the following situations where unauthorised absence occurs:

- Where a pupil has taken holiday during term-time for more than 4 days and the absence is not authorised by the school;
- Where a pupil has missed at least 9 sessions due to unauthorised absence in a school term e.g. lateness.

The penalty is payable to the Local Authority (details for the payment will be contained in the notice). The amount of the penalty is -

- £60 if paid within 21 days; please note this is £60 for each child, for each parent/carer (i.e. 2 children, 2 parent/carers = £240 fine) increasing to £120 between 21 and 28 days.

Absence Request Form



For the parent/carer to fill in:

Name	Class	School*

*Please include children in the family who attend other schools **but you must also complete a separate form for other schools.**

From:	To: (inclusive)	Total number of school days:
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Please give a reason for the absence request:

Signed: _____ Name: _____
(parent/carer)

Date: _____

Please return this form at least 4 weeks before the absence starts, together with evidence if necessary.

For the school to complete:

Date received: _____

Pupil's name: _____ Class: _____

Attendance record (% of absences): _____

Evidence provided: _____

High school contacted: Yes/No _____ Date: _____

Their decision: _____

<u>Authorised</u> Name: Signed:	<u>Reason for authorisation</u>
<u>NOT authorised</u> Name: Signed:	<u>Reason for refusal</u>

Family holiday – authorised H	Family holiday – NOT authorised G	Other unauthorised absence O	Religious observance R	Other authorised absence O
Reply to parent:			Register updated:	