

December 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Frome College Attendance

The attendance at Frome College is currently good and we rank favourably across the whole of Somerset for our overall attendance and even more so in our reduced number of students who are persistently absent. At Frome College we consider student happiness to be important, and good attendance is an excellent indicator of how well your child is coping with school-life. To ensure we continue with the upward trend we would, greatly appreciate your help to ensure that your child attends school every day. Good attendance is important for a student to develop their social skills, by making positive bonds with their peers and their teachers, as well as ensuring that their academic progress is not disrupted in any way, thus maximising their future potential.

Unbroken attendance at Frome College is important for learning. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. This letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

Types of Absence - Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Examples of unacceptable reasons

- Shopping visits
- Care for family members (unless registered young carers)
- Days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- Parents' work commitments or business trips
- Holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)

Somerset Education Welfare Service monitors all unauthorised absence and may have involvement if certain thresholds are met.



Illness and First Day Call

If your child is unable to attend college through illness you should inform us by telephoning **01373 469008** on the day of every absence before 9am or email us at FCC.Attendance@fromecollege.org. If you do not supply us with this information we have a duty to contact you so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts, this is a safeguarding measure.



Where the child is absent through illness or medical appointments this will normally be counted as authorised. If a student becomes ill during the school day they must attend first aid to be assessed and if necessary parents will be contacted to collect their child, this absence will be authorised. If however, a student leaves site because they are ill without attending first aid this absence will be unauthorised unless the parent is able to provide medical evidence to support the illness. If attendance levels drop below 95%, which is Frome Colleges' level of concern, parents will be contacted in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support; this may include a medical action plan.



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Table to show the impact of attendance levels on learning time:

Descriptor	Attendance Rate	Number of days absent	Lost hours of learning
Excellent	100 -98%	0 - 3	0 - 15
Good	97 95%	4 – 8.5	20 - 42
Requires improvement	94 – 91%	9.5 - 17	47.5 - 85
Persistent absentee	90 – 86%	19 -27	95 - 135
Critical	85% or below	28.5 or more	142.4 or more

How can I help my child raise their attendance over the next term?

- If your child is feeling poorly, do encourage them to attend school, as the school welfare officer will send a child home if she feels that this is necessary
- If your child is very poorly and is unable to attend school, please ring the school’s absence line – **01373 469008** – and leave the following information: your child’s full name, tutor group and the reason why your child is absent on that day – you are required to ring every morning that your child is off sick . After 10 school days, if we have not had contact from a parent giving a reason for absence we are obliged to record this as an ‘unauthorised’ absence.
- If your child has missed a day off school, please speak to them, or e-mail their teachers, to check that they have collected any work for the five missed lessons of that day
- If you notice that there is a particular barrier that is preventing your child from attending school, please contact your child’s Head of House – details can be found on the Frome College website under Students > House Areas.
- Every two days of attendance to school means that your child’s attendance will increase by 0.1%; therefore, within a few weeks, your child could move up a whole 1%

Medical/Dental Appointments

It is better if these can be arranged outside college hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where young people need to attend such appointments during the school day it is important that parents come to reception to collect their child. Students returning to college following an appointment need to sign in at student services. Students are expected to come to college after their appointment whenever possible. Medical and dental appointments count as authorised absences.

Lateness

Please ensure that your child arrives at college so that they are present for registration; this is done at 8.45am each day. Students are expected to be on site by 8.40am. Lateness affects learning and can cause further problems as key messages are missed. Where a genuine reason for lateness exists this will be marked as an authorised absence but where explanations are inadequate or the lateness is after 9am an absence (late) mark will be recorded. Students who arrive after 9am need to report immediately to Student Services to collect a late slip before going to class. Students arriving after 9.30am (when registers have closed) without a genuine reason will be recorded as unauthorised. We will make contact with parents if a student has more than five late marks in the previous two weeks, to ensure that we are doing all we can to support improved punctuality.

Leave of Absence

It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time. The Educational Welfare Service monitors all unauthorised absence and is likely to issue a Fixed Penalty Fine. This can be very expensive.

Approved Public Performance

Where children are invited to perform in a licensed show or concert (e.g. orchestra, pantomime) you are asked to consult with staff about how much time away from school is required. Where possible such requests will be granted provided that the child’s education is unlikely to suffer. The school will also be sympathetic towards leave to participate in a recognized city, county or national sporting event.

What we are aiming for.

Average attendance should be around 95% for the year, with outstanding attendance above 98%.

What is considered as poor attendance?

Anything below 94% is weak and below 90% is regarded as persistent absence by the Department for Education (DFE). Attendance below 85% is a serious cause for concern. Frome College aims for every student to achieve attendance levels of at least 95%. We monitor attendance closely and provide termly reports on each student's attendance. You can also access this information on Parent Portal. We systematically identify all those students whose attendance has fallen below our level of concern (95%) and issue a courtesy letter or make telephone calls informing parents. We then monitor the students' attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see a pattern of unbroken weeks of attendance developing.

We hope that these notes will help you to have a clear understanding of the school's expectations in this matter. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I would be very pleased to answer any questions you may have about our approach to maintaining and improving our attendance record.

Yours sincerely



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