

16 July 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian

## **ATTENDANCE, PUNCTUALITY & 'ATTEND'**

Following on from Mr Eastham's letter regarding the changes to attendance and punctuality, I am writing to give you some further information about the importance of excellent school attendance and punctuality as well as provide you with advanced warning of some key changes that the Department for Education (DfE) have recently announced and what this will mean for us here at Penwortham Priory Academy in monitoring school attendance and punctuality.

### **The importance of excellent school attendance and punctuality**

At Priory, we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all pupils and we recognise that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

Government research shows a direct link between attendance and attainment and good attenders also make better progress socially, learn to work with others, and are better prepared for the transition to secondary school and, eventually, higher education, training and employment. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends school and we will work with families to overcome any barriers to attending so that your daughters and sons can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

### **Communication regarding attendance and punctuality**

From September 2024, we will be using ATTEND which is part of our Synergy communication and you will receive updates on your child's punctuality and attendance from this part of Synergy. Also, this a reminder that you can log into Synergy in 'real time' to look at your child's attendance and punctuality across the whole school day. If you have any problems with Synergy, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [d.crank@priory.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:d.crank@priory.lancs.sch.uk)

We will also be sharing a half termly update of your child's attendance and there will also be attendance updates in our school newsletter to keep you updated with current legislation and our continued expectations.

### **How do we categorise absence?**

Our attendance target is 95%, but all pupils should strive to achieve 100% attendance. Attendance at Priory is categorised as follows:

- Attendance is at or above 95% and is classed as **good** attendance: this is the rate of attendance that we are advocating our pupils to strive for.
- Attendance between 95% and 90%: this will be classed as **below average** attendance
- Attendance below 90%: this is classed as **persistently absent**



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## **Appointments during the school day**

One of the ways to improve your child's attendance is to ensure that you make any medical and dental appointments during the school holidays or outside the school day. This can also avoid disruption to your child's day, which can be quite unsettling for them and other children when they arrive late to class due to an appointment.

## **The school day at Penwortham Priory Academy**

The school day starts at 8.30am when pupils are allowed on the school site and can make their way to form so they are on time for morning registration.

- Pupils must be in form for 8.40am for morning registration
- Afternoon registration is at 12.15pm in lesson 4.

Should your child arrive after registration has closed with no valid reason, he/she will receive an *unauthorised* absence for that session.

## **Recently announced changes from DfE**

To help you in your understanding of the new Attendance Framework – *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024* I have outlined some key changes below:

The threshold at which a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued from 2 September 2024 is now set at ten 'sessions'. Each school day is made up of two 'sessions'; one in the morning and one in the afternoon, so ten 'sessions' is classed as five days absence of / or lateness within a rolling ten-school week period.

If your child is off school for a whole school day with no valid reason this would count as two 'sessions' of unauthorised absence. If your child reaches ten 'sessions' of unauthorised absence, the school will apply to the local authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to parents whose children do not attend regularly.

## **Please note that this includes 'sessions' as a result of arriving late after the register closes in the morning or the afternoon**

It is imperative, therefore, that pupils arrive at school in good time.

Please also note that a school 'week' is determined as any week in which a school meets at least once in that week. The ten-school week period will also span different terms and school years on a rolling basis.

Fixed Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised absence will be charged at a new rate of **£160 per parent, per child**. Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with **no option for a discounted rate**.

Finally, a maximum of two penalty notices will be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period, so at the third (or subsequent) absence and/or lateness, another course of action will be used **such as prosecution which may affect a parents DBS certificate, if applied for**.

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**Please note these changes affect all parents as ensuring your child has regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility**

Whilst the new guidance and rules come from DfE, we support them as a school as any absence for your child means gaps in their knowledge and content which could mean they will find it more difficult to catch up and achieve their full potential. Absences can and do have a lasting effect on learning. Missing a week of school for example means your child will miss around 25 hours of learning.

Should you wish, there are further details in relation to attendance and punctuality in our *Attendance & Punctuality Policy August 2024* which can be accessed on our website. This includes information relating to leave of absence and the coding of absences.

For the moment though, I hope this letter has provided some useful information on what you can do to help your child to attend school and procedures we will be following moving forward.

May I take this opportunity to thank you as parents/carer for your continued support in working collaboratively with us to encourage your child to attend daily, be on time, and arrive to lessons on time.

Yours faithfully



**Mrs D Crank**  
**Assistant Principal**  
**Senior Attendance Champion**