



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

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Contents

Page(s)

1. Aims.....	3
2. Legislation and guidance.....	3
3. Roles and responsibilities.....	3
4. Attendance Procedures and recording attendance.....	7
First day absence	
Attendance Concerns	
Punctuality and Lates	
Attendance register	
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence.....	14
Penalty Notices	
6. Strategies for promoting attendance.....	19
7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school.....	19
8. Attendance monitoring.....	18
9. Alternative Provision and use of directions.....	19
10. Policy monitoring arrangements.....	20
11. Links with other policies and documents.....	20
Appendix 1 : Attendance codes	21 - 23
Appendix 2 : Notifications school must submit to the local authority	24 - 25
Appendix 3: School attendance and the law	25 - 26

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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 make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

At Priory Academy, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that pupils attend and enjoy their time at school. All staff will also promote and support punctuality in and around school, along with attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- [Securing Good Attendance and Tackling Persistent absence](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Trustees at Priory Academy

The Trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and other legislations, regulations and guidance. See appendix 'School Attendance and The Law'
- Agreeing an attendance policy and review it annually or more frequently if required
- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents / carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including :
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy
- Ensuring attendance is a focus and it is fit for purpose at this stage to have a link Trustee
The role will be for the Trustee to meet with School Attendance Champion regularly.

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school and ensuring the school confirms to statutory requirements regarding attendance
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Trustees
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Attendance Improvement Officer to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader also known as the 'School Attendance Champion' is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Regularly communicating pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents/carers.

School Attendance Champion for Priory Academy and the designated senior leader responsible for punctuality and attendance is Mrs Crank and can be contacted on d.crank@priory.lancs.sch.uk and / or 01772 320250.

3.4 The attendance improvement officer

The school attendance improvement officer is responsible for:

- First day response: contacting parents/carers if a reason for absence has not been provided and recording this information accordingly. Emergency contacts will be called if parents/carers cannot be reached
- Updating attendance registers
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the Principal
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal / School Attendance Champion when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance improvement officer is Mrs Brierley and can be contacted via 01772 320250 option 1 and / or attendance@priory.lancs.ch.uk

3.5 Class teachers and Form tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes of /, \ or N (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office at 8.50am and 12.25pm via Synergy.

Class teachers and form tutors are to record a child's attendance as either present or absent. All other attendance codes will be entered by the attendance team, pastoral team and Senior Attendance Champion Punctuality and Attendance Lead.

3.6 School Admin / Office staff

School Admin / Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents / carers about absence on a day-to-day basis inform the attendance officer immediately
- Transfer calls and emails from parents / carers to the members of the pastoral team and Heads of Year where appropriate in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

All staff are to

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for pupils and a safe learning environment, particularly for those returning to school following a period of absence
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to poor attendance and punctuality
- Recognise that absence is a symptom of other issues impacting a pupil's welfare and can be a warning sign of safeguarding concerns
- Adhere to the procedures in place within school to promote good attendance and punctuality
- Complete attendance registers in accordance with the legislation and under the direction of the Principal

- Raise any concerns about attendance with the School Attendance Champion and / or Principal

Pastoral staff contact details

Name	Role	Email
Mrs Crank	Senior Attendance Champion	d.crank@priory.lancs.sch.uk
Mr Shipton	Pastoral Manager (years 8 & 9)	g.shipton@priory.lancs.sch.uk
Mr Faulkner	Pastoral Manager (years 10 & 11)	p.faulkner@priory.lancs.sch.uk
Miss Burbidge	Pastoral Manager (Culture & Reflection)	r.burbidge@priory.lancs.sch.uk
Mrs Willis	Family Support Manager	a.willis@priory.lancs.sch.uk
Ms Swire	Family Support Manager / Attendance (p/t)	d.swire@priory.lancs.sch.uk
Mrs Brierley	Attendance Improvement Officer	attendance@priory.lancs.sch.uk
Mrs Holland	SENCo	a.holland@priory.lancs.sch.uk
Mrs Farley	Head of Year 7	l.farley@priory.lancs.sch.uk
Mrs Bailey	Head of Year 8	a.bailey@priory.lancs.sch.uk
Mrs Ham	Head of Year 9	k.ham@priory.lancs.sch.uk
Mrs Eastham	Head of Year 10	v.eastham@priory.lancs.sch.uk
Mrs Bullock	Head of Year 11	r.bullock@priory.lancs.sch.uk

3.7 Parents / Carers

Legal definition of 'parent' in relation to attendance

The law requires that all 'parents' are held responsible for their child's attendance.

This definition can include any person who has care of the child. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that : Meaning of 'parent' (1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person – (a) Who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or (b) Who cares for him

Thus, the definition of 'parent' means all natural parents, whether they are married or not, and includes any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility and / or care for a child or young person and / or those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly if they are of compulsory school age and registered at a school (see the appendix for details of how the law applies to school attendance and how "parent" is defined in law).

Parents /carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and attends every lesson on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance by contacting a member of the pastoral team, who consist of your child's Head of Year, pastoral manager, family support manager or attendance officer.
- Contact details for member of the pastoral team can be found on the following page

3.8 Lancashire County Council (the Local Authority)

School Attendance Support Team

Each school has a named contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can advise schools on attendance related matters, and with whom Targeting Support Meetings will be held. For mainstream nursery, primary and secondary schools this will be a School Attendance Support Worker (SASW); for special schools, short stay schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) this will be a School Attendance Consultant (SAC).

School Attendance Legal Team (SALT)

Following requests from schools for legal interventions when parents/carers fail to ensure their children attend regularly, the School Attendance Legal Team undertakes enforcement processes, including penalty notices, prosecutions, parenting orders, education supervision orders and school attendance orders.

Children Missing Education (CME) Team

The Children Missing Education Team ensures the local authority fulfils its statutory duty to identify children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. For further information see appendix 2.

See appendix for notifications that schools must submit the local authority.

3.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to :

- Attend school every day and attend on time
- Attend every timetabled session and attend on time

4. Attendance Procedures and Recording Attendance

Attendance procedures at Priory Academy

The school considers a good attendance record important: Good = 95% or above.

Each pupil is officially registered twice a day – once by the form tutor at 8.40am and then by the period 4 class teacher at 12.15pm.

In addition, their class teacher at the start of periods 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 registers each pupil.

Pupils are expected to be on the school premises by this time and in Form at the expected time.

The register is completed by the form tutor at the start of the form session using Synergy and by subject teachers at the start of each lesson.

There is a **legal requirement** to register pupils for both morning and afternoon sessions.

Latecomers, pupils who arrive after 8.40 am, must sign-in at reception. They then make their way immediately to their form or class; this will depend on time of arrival.

Should any pupil arrive late then they will be given a same day 10-minute breaktime detention. Should the pupil fail to arrive then this sanction will be escalated. Pupils with 2 lates in a week will be issued an ASD.

Pupils who arrive at school late should not be admitted to class until they have signed in at reception. This is important for health and safety reasons.

Arrivals after 9.10am will be marked as U and must be explained by parental / carer contact.

Each absence is recorded and must be specifically explained as soon as possible (a statutory requirement).

The school requires parents / carers to contact the school, stating the precise dates of absence and the reasons for each period of absence.

First day of absence

Contact with the school should be made on **each day of absence**. Where parents / carers fail to make contact, Mrs Brierley, the School Attendance Improvement Officer will endeavour to contact them. Parents / carers can contact school by :

- Calling the attendance line on 01772 320250 option 1
- Or email attendance@priory.lancs.sch.uk

If you leave a message on the voicemail for the attendance team, please state :

- Your name
- Contact number
- Your child's name, year group and form
- Reason for absence
- Expected date of return

If a pupil is marked absent, it is necessary to indicate the reason for this absence as soon as it is known so that all unauthorised absences can be identified. All absences **must** be explained. If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will telephone you on the first day of absence to find out what the reason is and when your child is expected to return. If we are unable to contact you, we will approach your emergency contacts and, if necessary, make a home visit. Please note that such home visits may be unannounced. School finishes at 3.10pm

Attendance concerns

Parents / carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with us in resolving any attendance problems together; this is nearly always successful. However, if concerns persist or absences are unexplained, school will use the following procedures and interventions, as required, to support parents/carers in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality:

- Telephone calls and/or letters to make parents/carers aware of school's concern about their child's attendance
- When there is uncertainty about the reason for absence, school may ask parents/carers to provide appropriate evidence and/or undertake home visits to ascertain where a child is and to ensure they are safe
- Invitation to meetings to discuss concerns with Principal / Senior Attendance Champion / Head of Year / Pastoral staff / class teacher as required
- Attendance contracts to identify barriers to regular attendance, ways to overcome these and agree targets for improvement
- Incentive and reward schemes for individual pupils, if appropriate
- The Early Help Assessment (EHA) process and/or referral to other agencies and services, including School Nurses and Primary Mental Health Workers, if appropriate
- For unauthorised absences, request legal interventions by the local authority, such as penalty notices, prosecution or other attendance-related court orders.

At any stage, we may seek advice from the local authority School Attendance Support Team (SALT).

Punctuality & Lates

If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work, vital information and key updates from their teacher.

Pupils arriving late can also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day impacts and adds up throughout the academic year.

If your child is often late, you will be contacted by the attendance / pastoral team to discuss ways to improve punctuality, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems in getting your child to school on time.

All of your child's attendance can be seen in 'real-time' on Synergy. SLT, pastoral team, class teachers, form staff and the attendance improvement officer will monitor the late arrival of pupils to school and apply sanctions appropriately.

A pupil who arrives late :

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. This is code L. Form register closes at 8.50am and the AM school register closes at 9.10am.
- After the school register has closed the pupil will be marked as absent using the appropriate code. This is code U.

In case of emergency, the register shows the pupil is on the premises, but they will **not** receive a present mark toward their overall attendance.

Parents / carers will be contacted by school if their child is persistently late and invited into school to discuss this further.

Why being punctual is important

Being on time for school:

- Helps pupils make friends and socialise with their peers
- Helps get pupils day off to a good start and puts them in a positive frame of mind
- Sets pupils up for the future – whether it's college or an apprenticeship. They could lose their place or if they think it is ok to be late
- Helps pupils understand that school is important, and education is valuable
- Helps pupils develop a sense of responsibility for him / herself and towards others
- Is linked to good attendance – good attendees have more opportunities and therefore achieve more
- Leads to success and self confidence
- The best place for any child is in school, attending lessons and learning.

Top Tips for Improving Punctuality

- Make sure your child has a good bedtime routine so they get plenty of rest and don't struggle out of bed in the morning
- Know your child's timetable. Plan together to make sure they have everything ready the night before; eg uniform, books, PE kit etc ...
- Establish a routine for homework in the evening, not the morning it's due in
- Invest in a good, reliable alarm clock and make setting it part of your child's bedtime routine
- Ensure your child has a good breakfast to set them up for the day.
- Have a backup plan for getting your child to school in case something unforeseen happens - friends or family, perhaps neighbours who are taking their children to school anyway
- Allow enough time for your journey

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is :

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include :

- The original entry
- The amended entry and the reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.40am and ends at 3.10pm.

Pupils must arrive in form by 8.40am on **each** school day.

The register for the first session will be taken in form at 8.40am and will be kept open until 8.50am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 12.15pm and will be kept open until 12.25pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent / carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school attendance line on 01772 320250 option 1.

The attendance team can also be contacted via email at attendance@priory.lancs.sch.uk Please leave as much information as possible about your child's absence.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

The 'NHS - Is my child too ill for school?' document is used where required to support pupils, parents / carers. See the link [here](#) for further support.

4.3 Planned absence including leave of absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carers 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 pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. When informing school of your child's medical or dental appointment, please provide information relating to the appointment such as a copy of the appointment letter, text, etc.

The pupil's parent/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Please see Section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Recent instruction from the Department of Education (DfE) now makes it very unlikely that permission for family leave of absence will be granted, except in the most exceptional of circumstances.

In determining whether an absence request is exceptional, the school will follow DfE guidelines and leave requests will only be authorised in extreme circumstances. Any parent / carer requesting **any** leave of absence for their child **must** complete and return a leave of absence form.

Leave of Absence request form can be obtained from the school office or downloaded from the school's website. Completed forms are then either emailed to attendance@priory.lancs.sch.uk or handed in to Mrs Brierley in the main school office.

4.4 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent / carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will contact the police and request a welfare check to be carried out
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent / carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving LCC's Attendance Improvement Officer.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and / or their parents / carers to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, a Notice to Improve may be issued, Penalty Notice or other legal intervention. (See section 5.2, as appropriate)

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels. Pupils attendance can be seen in real-time on Synergy which both pupils and parents / carers have access to. Paper copies of attendance are also given with each academic report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers. As a school, we will always work with parents/carers (and other agencies, as appropriate) to understand the reasons underlying absence.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes or exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable or justifiable. If school has followed its attendance procedures and a pupil continues to have unauthorised absences, the school may see seek advice from the local authority School Attendance Support Team

or request legal interventions from the School Attendance Legal Team. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping their child off school unnecessarily
- Absences which are not explained satisfactorily
- Pupils who arrive at school after the register has closed and without a legitimate reason
- Days off for shopping, birthdays or looking after other children
- Day trips and other leave in term time which have not been agreed by the Principal
- Days that exceed an amount of leave agreed by the Principal

It is the Principal's responsibility to decide if an absence is authorised or unauthorised and, if there is any uncertainty relating to an absence, school may request further confirmation from parents / carers before an absence is authorised. For absence due to illness, this may be in the form of:

- Sight of an appointment for your GP or for the hospital, clinic, etc.
- Sight of prescribed medication or prescription for medication
- Sight of medical notes/records
- A letter from a medical professional such as a specialist or consultant

Parents/carers should not ask their doctor (GP) to provide "sick notes" to excuse absence.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. If your child is reluctant to attend it is better to speak to school as soon as possible to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. As a school, we will always work with parents/carers (and external agencies as appropriate) to understand and address the reasons behind absence.

Persistent absence is when a pupil misses 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason, authorised and unauthorised (including illness, exclusion, holiday, etc). Absence at this level will damage any pupil's educational prospects and we expect parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to address this.

At Priory Academy, we monitor all absence thoroughly; therefore, any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be prioritised and parents/carers will be informed of this promptly. Pupils who are persistent absentees are tracked and monitored carefully and then all attendance procedures will be followed.

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Principal will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable

➤ Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events which are unavoidable. They are personal circumstances that are out of the control of the parents /carers / pupil. Examples of exceptional circumstances include :-

- The death of a close relative
- Attendance at a funeral
- Respite care of a child looked after by the Local Authority
- A housing crisis which prevents attendance

Exceptional circumstances must be short term, arise unexpectedly, and be beyond your control.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks prior before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website – Parents – Attendance – Leave of absence request

The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the **one** day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) /carer(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's/carer's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parents /carers 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience

- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty Notices & Costs

The Principal (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a [penalty notice](#), it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance / punctuality for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents/carers allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents/carers that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent/carer who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parents/carers who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent/carers must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent/carers must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent/carers in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

The code of conduct for penalty notices and information and FAQs for parents/carers can be found on the Lancashire County Council education penalty notice page on the website.

Notices to Improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents/carers do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a Notice to Improve to give parents/carers a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to Improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents/carers under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

School will promote and incentivise attendance by acknowledging and rewarding good attendance by all pupils and efforts to improve attendance by individual pupils who have additional needs or challenging circumstances. Attendance will be celebrated routinely including for example through school newsletters, year assemblies, house assemblies, celebration assemblies and whole school assemblies.

7. Supporting pupils

Pupils with medical needs who have difficulty attending school

Government guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (see appendix) emphasises the role of governing bodies in ensuring that pupils with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other pupils. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these pupils, whether their condition is short or long term.

School will work with parents/carers and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may be in the form of reasonable adjustments, specific support or resources used within school, or by sourcing appropriate provision at another establishment. When education is to be provided at an alternative location, this should always be done via the use of a direction (please see section 6, below).

When a pupil has been absent from school for an extended period, Principal, pastoral staff / class teacher / form tutor and other support services will work with the family to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If your child is absent due to complex barriers, then please contact school to discuss this further. In the first instance, you can contact your child's Head of Year.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the Local Authority.

As part of any plan to support the child to attend well, the school will facilitate relevant pastoral support. This will be done with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible while supporting the underlying mental health or physical ill health issue.

If your child is unable to attend due to mental or physical ill health or SEND, please contact Mrs Holland (SENCo) or Mrs Willis (Family Support Manager) to discuss your child's attendance. These discussions will be as supportive as possible to ensure your child returns to school feeling supported.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

If your child has been absent for a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence we will ensure that a phased approach is taken to ensure that they return to school and the transition is as smooth as possible. Please contact Mrs Crank (Assistant Principal / Senior Attendance Champion), Mrs Holland (SENCo) or Mrs Alex Willis (Family Support Manager) to discuss your child's attendance. These discussions and arrangements will be as supportive as possible to ensure your child returns to school feeling supported.

7.4 Pupils refusing to attend school

At Priory Academy, we believe that every child has a right to a full-time education, and we would not accept "school refusal" as a reason for non-attendance. In such cases, we will work with parents/carers to identify the reasons why a child may be reluctant to attend school. We may request advice from the School Attendance Support Team and, with consent, make referrals to other external partners such as the Children and Family Wellbeing Service or Primary Mental Health Workers, as appropriate, to try to ensure the correct support is secured for the child and their family. The best place for any child is in school.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor all aspects of attendance and absence data (including punctuality) daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be 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. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the attendance data can be accessed regularly and securely.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis

- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports via Synergy to teaching staff and form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the Trustees and SLT (including SENCo, DSLs and Pupil Premium Lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents / carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.
- Implement sanctions, where necessary
- Embed any other bespoke strategies or intervention that school may feel would benefit the child, parent / carer

Parents / carers will be invited into school to attend an attendance meeting if there are unauthorised absences to which need further discussion is needed.

9. Alternative provision and use of directions

There is a range of circumstances when pupils might be required to access educational provision at a venue other than their main school. The main reasons are:

- Pupils who have been permanently excluded or suspended for a period of more than 5 days.
- Pupils unable to access provision at their main school for medical reasons.
- Pupils required to attend another venue for the purpose of improving behaviour, either on a temporary basis or with a view to making a permanent move to the alternative provision (via a Managed Transfer).

When a pupil is required to attend alternative provision for the purposes of improving behaviour, the Trustees of the school will issue a written direction or notice informing all parents/carers of the alternative provision which their child is required to attend. Where a pupil is required to attend alternative provision for other reasons, the issuing of a written direction is considered best practice.

10. Policy monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and / or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every half term by Donna Crank (Assistant Principal / Senior Champion Lead). At every review, the policy will be approved.

11. Links with other policies and DfE Documents

This policy links to the following policies and documents, but is **not** limited to :

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Behaviour & Discipline Policy
- DfE Working Together To Improve School Attendance
- LCC Guidance – Managing Medical Absences
- DfE Guidance – Mental health issues affecting a pupil’s attendance guidance for schools
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) – September 2024
- LCC Guidance – School Attendance Support Checklist 2024
- DfE Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

School Attendance Codes August 2024 onwards

Code	Meaning	Type
/ \	Present at school / morning \ afternoon	Present Mark
B	Attending any other approved educational activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative Provision (AP) not arranged through the approved framework 	Present Mark
C	Authorised Circumstance	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attending Alternative Provision at another school site Hospital education Education at a secure / residential site Off-site direction / manage move 	Present Mark
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision (AP) made	Authorised absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school or Term Leave not granted by the school	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for an admission to another educational institution	Authorised absence
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority, home tutoring, approved framework for alternative provision, blended learning	Present Mark
L	Late arrival before the registers have closed	Present Mark
M	Attended a medical appointment – medical evidence may be required	Authorised absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised Mark
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised Mark
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Present Mark
Q	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	Not expected to attend
R	Religious observance	Authorised Mark
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in	Authorised

	school	Absence
T	Parent/carer travelling for occupational purposes, and the pupil has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months	Authorised Absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised Absence
V	Attending an educational trip or visit	Present Mark
W	Attending Work Experience	Present Mark
X	Non-compulsory school age not required to attend school	Present Mark
Y	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause (see next page for breakdown)	Not expected to attend
Z	Prospective or previous pupil not on admission register	Not expected to attend

School Attendance Codes August 2024 onwards : Y & C Codes

Code	Meaning	Type
The Y code : unable to attend school because of unavoidable case, is broken down into the following sub-codes to provide better differentiation of the reason :		
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not available	Not expected to attend
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not expected to attend
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. For example, this may be due to damage or teacher strikes	Not expected to attend
Y4	Unable to attend due to whole school site being unexpectedly closed. For example, extreme weather, damage, no hot water or heating	Not expected to attend
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention. For example, in police detention, remanded in youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention	Not expected to attend
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law. Contrary to or prohibited to any guidance relating to the incident or transmission of infection or disease	Not expected to attend
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. For example, an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil not just the parent/carer	Not expected to attend

The C code : Authorised absence is broken down into the following sub codes to provide a better differentiation of the reason :		
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion	Authorised Absence
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised Absence
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Authorised Absence

Appendix 2 : Notifications school must submit to the local authority

Admissions

All schools must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of the school's youngest year unless the local authority also requests for such information to be provided (currently Lancashire does not).

Leavers

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in Regulation 9 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided (Lancashire currently does not).

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the required information as laid out in the regulation.

In addition to submitting a notification about removal from roll, some circumstances also require school to make referral to other local authority teams such as the Elective Home Education team or the Children Missing Education team. Schools may also contact the School Attendance Support Team for advice on removing children from roll. For pupils with an EHCP on roll at a special school, the school must have the agreement of the Lancashire Inclusion Service (SEND) before removing from roll.

Pupils who fail to attend

All schools (including academies) must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. In Lancashire schools, this can be done via a variety of means and school can contact the School Attendance Support Team for further advice.

Pupils on a part-time timetable

Schools must also inform the local authority when a pupil is placed on a part-time timetable. In Lancashire, this should be done via the appropriate form available to schools.

Children missing education (CME)

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not on roll at a school or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure they receive a full-time education.

If a pupil has stopped attending and her or his location is unknown, schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting

the pupil's name from the register. In such cases, school should undertake a home visit, prior to a referral being made to the local authority Children Missing Education team.

Appendix 3: School attendance and the law

There are many pieces of legislation and government regulations and guidance that are relevant to school attendance and to children and their parents and carers. The list below relates to this attendance policy but is not exhaustive. Some elements of government regulations and DfE guidance do not apply to academies and independent schools (but may apply to independent special schools).

Offence if a child does not attend regularly

Under [Section 444 of the Education Act 1996](#), if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly, their parent/carers is guilty of an offence.

The offence is absolute as the only defences available to the parent/carers are those statutory defences listed within that section of the Act, ie:

- the child was absent with leave granted by the school;
- the child was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause;
- absence was on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which their parent/carers belongs;
- that the school is not within statutory walking distance and that the local education authority has made no suitable transport arrangements or enabled the pupil to become registered at an alternative nearer school.

Compulsory school age

[Section 8 of the Education Act 1996](#) establishes that a child becomes of compulsory school age on the start date of the term following her/his fifth birthday, or that day if her/his fifth birthday falls on the day term starts.

A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which he/she reaches the age of 16 or if he/she reaches 16 after the last Friday in June but before the start of the new school year.

Schools

Attendance and absence registration codes

[Working together to improve school attendance](#), DfE statutory guidance 2024, explains which codes schools should use to record attendance and absence in their registers, and specifies the DfE's expectations of schools and local authorities with respect to school attendance.

Data protection

Schools must ensure that personal data is handled in accordance with the [Data Protection Act 2018](#). See Priory Academy's Privacy Notice for information about how personal data will be used.

Duty for schools to include attendance information in reports for parents

[The Education \(Pupil Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2005](#)

Duty for schools to notify the local authority when pupils join or leave school

[Regulation 13 of The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

Duty for schools to report attendance concerns about individual pupils to the local authority

[Regulation 13 of The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

Duty for schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

[Keeping children safe in education](#), DfE statutory guidance, regularly updated

Duty for schools to share attendance data with the Government

[Section 537A of the Education Act 1996](#) and

[Share your daily school attendance](#), DfE guidance 2024

Leave of absence

[Regulation 11 of The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

Legal interventions

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child who is on a school roll fails to attend regularly and those absences are recorded by the school as unauthorised. Legal interventions are available under the following acts, guidance and regulations:

- [Section 444 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- [Section 36 of the Children Act 1989](#)
- [Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#), DfE guidance 2015

Pupils experiencing social, emotional or mental health issues

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#), DfE 2023

Pupils with health needs who cannot attend school

[Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#), DfE statutory guidance 2023

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#), DfE statutory guidance 2015

Pupils with individual needs and specific barriers to attendance

When considering the individual needs of pupils and families who have specific barriers to attendance, schools should be mindful of their obligations under the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and the [Equality Act 2010](#). The [Technical Guidance for Schools in England](#), published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, outlines the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 for schools.

Regulations regarding participation in performances

[The Children \(Performances and Activities\) \(England\) Regulations 2014](#)

Regulations regarding removal from roll

[Regulation 9 of The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

Regulations regarding the school day and number of sessions

[The Education \(School Day and School Year\) \(England\) Regulations 1999](#)

Requirement for mainstream, state-funded schools to deliver a school week of at least 32.5 hours

[Length of the school week, DfE guidance 2023](#)

[Specialist and alternative provision settings are also encouraged to consider extending their core week where appropriate.](#)