

# **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

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## **Contents**

	<u>Page(s)</u>
Aim	3
Principles	3
Key Personnel	3
Duties	3
Roles and Responsibilities	3-5
Attendance Procedures	6
Leave of Absence	7
Unauthorised Absence	7/8
Penalty Notices	8
Appendix for Coronavirus	9-12

## **Aim**

The aim of this policy is to encourage pupils to attend school every day (190 days per year) and to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities available. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and it is essential for pupils to maximise their chances of success. There is clear evidence showing strong links between excellent GCSE results and excellent school attendance. The aim of this policy is therefore to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance for individuals, groups and the student body as a whole. The school classes good attendance as 97% or above.

## **Principles**

- To improve the efficiency of monitoring attendance and punctuality and to identify, at the earliest possible stage, those students for whom attendance/punctuality to school and to lessons is a problem
- To develop the students' awareness of the necessity and importance of attendance and punctuality so that they gain the maximum benefit from their education in school.
- To reduce further the numbers of unauthorised absences.
- To reward those students who attend school on a regular basis and are punctual to lessons.
- To aim that all students want to come to school through successful implementation of the school's aims.

## **Key personnel**

**Headteacher** the Headteacher is the only person who can authorise leave in 'exceptional circumstances'

**SLT Link** the SLT link for attendance is Mrs D Crank

**Attendance / Family Support Manager** is Mrs D Swire

**Attendance Officer** the attendance officer is Miss E Bolton

## **Duties**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and guardians to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education. Parents/Guardians are responsible for their child's school attendance and punctuality.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll. In addition, lesson registers are taken at the start of each period.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The school will encourage and value high attendance rates. The school will recognise the external factors, which influence pupil attendance and will work in partnership with parents, the Attendance team and other relevant services to deal with any issues. The school will take a proactive approach to the promotion of good attendance by defining expectations with students and their parents and will provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with legal requirements.

### **All staff should:**

- Help to create an atmosphere, which is inviting, where pupils feel secure and comfortable.
- Work to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils
- Encourage pupils to be involved in all aspects of school life.
- Accurately record attendance/punctuality to lessons and take appropriate action at departmental level when necessary.
- Ensure attendance/punctuality data is used when issuing related monitoring concerns.
- Comment on attendance/punctuality at parents' evenings and on school reports where these factors have hindered progress.

### **Form Tutors**

- Register pupils accurately and on time
- Ensure pupils are provided with appropriate attendance and punctuality data
- Tackle pupils who persistently arrive late
- Notify the appropriate Heads of Year when punctuality/attendance deteriorates
- Work with pupils to improve punctuality/attendance
- Collect in and submit letters and medical evidence to the Attendance Officer

### **Attendance Officer**

- Make sure all staff have up-to-date and correct registers
- Contact parents/guardians when reasons for absence are unknown, or unauthorised. Letters home when no explanation is given for an absence
- Regularly monitor pupil attendance and punctuality
- Ensure agreed periods of absence are recorded
- Report school attendance statistics
- Ensure absence is correctly categorised
- Submit attendance data to the Department of Education on a termly basis
- Flag students with persistent poor attendance to the Attendance/Family Support Manager

### **Attendance / Family Support Manager**

Use attendance data to identify students who have poor attendance. Working with the Attendance Officer and Heads of Year to identify students for support and close monitoring.

- Work closely with parents of targeted students to provide support and pressure to get students to return to school.
- Present and prepare attendance assembly
- Keep in contact with long-term absentees and liaise with LEAP and Heads of Year to ensure that effective reintegration strategies and identifying “catch up” needs.
- Contact parents where absences have remained unexplained despite the intervention of the Form Tutor/ Attendance Officer.
- Work with targeted students to improve attendance through parental contact, attendance reports, short-term targets and rewards. Paying particular attention to students who are at risk of becoming persistent absentee students.
- To visit homes where contact has been lost or where a child is refusing to attend school.
- Identify and prepare cases a referral for court action when required.
- Work with Pastoral Support Managers to involve outside agencies with individuals and groups of students.
- To work as an advocate for the student.
- Meet with students who are improving their attendance and suitable reward.
- Investigate reports of illegal juvenile employment of students and liaise with Pastoral Manager on appropriate action.

### **SLT**

- Review attendance policy annually and assess its impact
- Monitor attendance/punctuality procedures and ensure correct implementation.
- Work with Heads of Year to ensure school attendance policies are being applied.
- Support Heads of Year, Attendance Officer and Attendance/Family Support manager when working with ‘difficult’ parents
- Authorise ‘agreed’ absence and ‘educational visits.
- Liaise with Attendance/Family Support manager to ensure action is taken against persistent non-attendees
- Provide governors with a termly attendance/punctuality report.

### **Responsibilities of students**

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or leaving the school site during school hours.

### **Responsibilities of parents/carers**

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should familiarise themselves with this attendance policy and should work closely with school staff to overcome any problems, which may affect a child's attendance.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence
- Discuss with the tutor/class teacher any planned absences well in advance
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

### **Attendance Procedures**

1. The school considers a good attendance record important: Good = 97% or above.

2. Each pupil is officially registered twice a day – once by the form tutor at 8.40 and then by the period 4 teacher at 12.15pm. In addition, their class teacher at the start of Periods 1, 2, 3, and 5 registers each pupil.

3. 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.

Students with three lates in any one week will be issued an after-school detention by the Attendance Officer. Students 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.

4. Arrivals after 9.30 are considered as absence and must be explained by parental contact. Otherwise, unauthorised absence is recorded.

5. Each absence is recorded and must be specifically explained as soon as possible (a statutory requirement). The school requires parents to contact the school, stating the precise dates of absence and the reasons for each period of absence.

6. Contact with the school should be made on each day of absence. Where parents fail to make contact, the School Attendance Officer will endeavour to contact them.

7. 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. Absences still unexplained after 5 days will be recorded as unauthorised.

8. Absences are categorised into one of the following groups:

- Illness
- Medical Appointment
- Complex family circumstances
- Agreed absence for special reasons e.g., bereavement
- Allowed absence for religious observance\*
- Study leave
- Unauthorised absence (truancy or not allowed)

\*In line with LA guidance, pupils are allowed to take up to a maximum of two days per academic year for religious festivals e.g., Eid.

9. Absence of pupils to take part in supervised educational activities outside the school but authorised by the school is recorded as "approved educational activity". This is the equivalent of 'present' for the purposes of the annual absence return and performance tables. Such pupils must be recorded as being off-site for health and safety reasons or in the event of an emergency.

10. Any leave of absence should be applied prior to the absence (see section below)

### **Leave of Absence**

Recent instruction from the Department of Education (September 2013) now makes it very unlikely that permission for family holidays/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 national guidelines and holidays/leave requests will only be authorised in extreme circumstances.

In line with the above procedures, all but absences in extreme circumstances will be recorded as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice £60/£120 (per parent per child) if their child is absent without prior arrangement with the Head teacher.

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](mailto:attendance@priory.lancs.sch.uk) or handed in to Miss E Bolton in the main school office.

### **Term time absence: Final position following Isle of Wight Council v Platt decision in Supreme Court**

The Supreme Court delivered its judgement in relation to the Isle of Wight Council's appeal which sought clarification on what is meant by "fails to attend regularly" in the context of a prosecution for unauthorised non-attendance at school.

The Supreme Court said that "regular" means "in accordance with the rules published by the school" and rejected the view that regular meant "sufficiently frequently". This clarifies the position regarding term time absence. The judgement confirmed that schools can determine whether an absence is authorised or not.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:

- School has not given approval in advance for a pupil to be absent
- School does not accept a given explanation as satisfactory justification for absence
- Medical evidence requested by school is not forthcoming
- No explanation of absence is received within two weeks

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised. NB: In some cases, part of a requested leave of absence may be authorised due to exceptional circumstance, with the remainder of the requested absence being unauthorised. In this situation, a parent could still be fined if the unauthorised period exceeds the 10-session threshold.

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed return date. Re-admission cannot be guaranteed. The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (i-iii) of the Education (pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010 and 2013)

If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether that absence is authorised or unauthorised. In cases where parents seem to condone unauthorised absence, school may involve the court officer.

Support mechanisms the school will use and the trigger points for the implementation of those actions. These include:

- Home contact by text or telephone
- Letters to clarify and, if necessary, warn of future sanctions
- Meetings in school
- Home visits by the Attendance/Family Support Manager
- Referrals through the CAF process to other agencies
- Fixed Penalty notices
- Court Action

### **Penalty Notices**

The Governing Body have agreed to adopt the Government initiative of imposing Penalty Notices in cases of persistent unauthorised absence and persistent lateness to Registration.

Parents will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and will have 10 days to ensure an improvement in attendance and / or punctuality. Failure to ensure improvement will lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices are issued by the court officer to the family home. The fine for unauthorised absence currently stands at £60/£120 per parent/carer per child. Non-payment of the Penalty within the 28-day time limit will trigger the prosecution process under the Provisions of Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

In circumstances where a Penalty Notice has been served with no impact on attendance patterns, show chronic poor attendance school may request a prosecution through Section 444 (1) of the 1996 Education Act. This will result in prosecution through the courts if there is no improvement in attendance.

According to government guidance, the term 'parent' means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child.

## **Penwortham Priory Academy**

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **Appendix for Coronavirus**

Penwortham Priory Academy will adhere to the UK Government's attendance guidance and will follow the procedural changes introduced by our local educational authority, Lancashire County Council.

**Please read the following NHS guidance:**

### **Children and young people (aged 18 years and under) who have symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19**

Respiratory infections are common in children and young people, particularly during the winter months. Symptoms can be caused by several respiratory infections including the common cold, COVID-19 and RSV.

For most children and young people, these illnesses will not be serious, and they will soon recover following rest and plenty of fluids.

Very few children and young people with respiratory infections become seriously unwell. This is also true for children and young people with long-term conditions. Some children under 2, especially those born prematurely or with a heart condition, can be more seriously unwell from [RSV](#).

Attending education is hugely important for children and young people's health and their future.

### **When children and young people with symptoms should stay at home and when they can return to education**

Children and young people with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education setting.

Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school, college or childcare, and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough to attend.

All children and young people with respiratory symptoms should be encouraged to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when coughing and/or sneezing and to wash their hands after using or disposing of tissues.

## **Children and young people aged 18 years and under who have a positive test result**

**It is not recommended that children and young people are tested for COVID-19 unless directed to by a health professional.**

If a child or young person has a positive COVID-19 test result they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test, if they can. After 3 days, if they feel well and do not have a high temperature, the risk of passing the infection on to others is much lower. This is because children and young people tend to be infectious to other people for less time than adults.

Children and young people who usually go to school, college or childcare and who live with someone who has a positive COVID-19 test result should continue to attend as normal.

## **School Support**

The attendance team will be working closely with heads of year and pastoral staff to help identify students whose attendance could be affected by the need for additional social and emotional support. Pupils may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school, particularly if they fall into one of the following groups:

- pupils who have been shielding.
- those living in households where someone else is clinically vulnerable.
- students concerned about their comparative risk to coronavirus, such those from a BAME background or children with certain conditions such as obesity and/or diabetes.

A proactive approach will be taken with pupils who have previously had poor attendance, particularly in cases where there have been low levels of engagement during the home school period.

The attendance team will work closely with parents of pupils where returning to school is proving more challenging. We will aim to build strong relationships and to maintain an open dialogue with parents who need further support, information, or reassurance on the importance and/or safety of returning to school.

Where it is felt that a parent and/or pupil is failing to engage with the support provided, the full range of attendance related sanctions will be considered, including the issuing of penalty notices.

## **Punctuality**

It is vital when school re-opens to all pupils in September 2020 that students arrive on time and be at their first period from 8.30am and no later than 8.50am. Students arriving late increase the risk of out-of-bubble contacts, potentially, spreading the disease across the school community.

Parents/carers are expected to support school with their child's punctuality to school. Pupils arriving late with no valid reason will be sanctioned with an after-school detention on the day.

## **Arrival time**

School will open from 8.30am for all year groups. Lessons start at 8.50am.

## **Finishing time**

Years 7 and 9	3.00pm
Years 8 and 10	3.05pm
Year 11	3.10pm