

# **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

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## **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 in order 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 Improvement Worker** the AIW is Mrs D Swire

**Attendance Officer** the attendance officer is Mrs A Kouser

## **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 Improvement Worker 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.

**Progress 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 for the AIW

**Attendance Improvement Worker**

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 House 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 House to ensure school attendance policies are being applied.
- Support Heads of House, Attendance Officer and AIW when working with 'difficult' parents
- Authorise 'agreed' absence and 'educational visits'.
- Liaise with AIW to ensure action is taken against persistent non-attendeers
- 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.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Attendance targets are set for individual pupils and year groups.
- Attendance and punctuality data is regularly reviewed.

## **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 8.50, must sign-in at reception before going to class. If no valid reason is given, the student will be issued with a break time detention.

Three lates in any one-month period will result in a text home to parents and for any further lates school will contact home to discuss punctuality concerns. The pupil will be issued an after-school detention by their Heads of House. 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 has to 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 three weeks will be recorded as unauthorised.

8. Absences are categorise 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 schools website. Completed forms are then either emailed to a.garham@priory.lancs.sch.uk or handed in to Mrs Kouser 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 Improvement Worker
- 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 15 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 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 at school the 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.

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## **Penwortham Priory Academy**

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **Appendix for the Coronavirus Impacted Period**

For the duration of the Coronavirus pandemic, Penwortham Priory Academy will adhere to the UK Government's attendance guidance and will following the procedural changes introduced by our local educational authority, Lancashire County Council.

It is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing, and wider development. Schools are required by the government to be clear with parents and carers that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies.

The aim of this policy appendix is to ensure school is ready to welcome back all pupils full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. This policy amendment recognises that some school norms and routines have been disrupted by the coronavirus outbreak and that some pupils may have been exposed to a range of adverse experiences, outlining the actions we will be taking to reset attendance expectations and to support the successful reintegrate of pupils.

#### **Attendance from September**

Attendance is **mandatory** for all pupils from the start of the new school year. This means that from 1 September 2020, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends regularly.
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow-up absences.
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

From September, we will resume the expectation that parents will let the school know if their child is unable to attend school and the reason for the absence. If school has had no contact from parents prior to morning registration on the first day of absence, our attendance team will endeavour to contact with the pupil's parent/carer. If no contact can be made, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and could lead to the issuing of a penalty notice.

#### **Pupil Illness**

Pupils exhibiting any coronavirus symptoms should not attend school in any circumstance, as this could lead to a wider population outbreak. Children exhibiting symptoms should be tested as quickly as possible and school informed of the outcome.





#### **Coronavirus symptoms:**

- a new continuous dry trickly cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

Please read the following NHS guidance:





## COVID-19 (coronavirus) absence: A quick guide for parents / carers



What to do if...	Action needed	Back to school...
 <p><b>...my child has COVID-19 (coronavirus) symptoms*</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Child should get a test</li> <li>• Whole household self-isolates while waiting for test result</li> <li>• Inform school immediately about test results</li> </ul>	<p><b>...when child's test comes back negative and child is well enough</b></p>
 <p><b>...my child tests positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Child self-isolates for at least 10 days from when symptoms* started (or from day of test if no symptoms)</li> <li>• Inform school immediately about test results</li> <li>• Whole household self-isolates for 14 days from day when symptoms* started (or from day of test if no symptoms) - <i>even if someone tests negative during those 14 days</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>...when child feels better, and has been without a fever for at least 48 hours</b></p> <p>They can return to school after 10 days even if they have a cough or loss of smell / taste. These symptoms can last for several weeks once the infection is gone.</p>
 <p><b>...somebody in my household has COVID-19 (coronavirus) symptoms*</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Household member with symptoms should get a test</li> <li>• Whole household self-isolates while waiting for test result</li> <li>• Inform school immediately about test results</li> </ul>	<p><b>...when household member test is negative, and child does not have COVID-19 symptoms*</b></p>
 <p><b>...somebody in my household has tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Whole household self-isolates for 14 days from day when symptoms* started (or from day of test if no symptoms) - <i>even if someone tests negative during those 14 days</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>...when child has completed 14 days of self-isolation, even if they test negative during the 14 days</b></p>

\* Symptoms include at least one of a high temperature; a new continuous cough; a loss of or change to your sense of smell or taste. See more at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

What to do if...	Action needed	Back to school...
 <p>...NHS Test and Trace has identified my child as a 'close contact' of somebody with symptoms* or confirmed COVID-19 (coronavirus)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Child self-isolates for 14 days (as advised by NHS Test and Trace) – even if they test negative during those 14 days</li> <li>• Rest of household does not need to self-isolate, unless they are a 'close contact' too</li> </ul>	<p><b>...when the child has completed 14 days of self-isolation, even if they test negative during those 14 days</b></p>
 <p>...we / my child has travelled and has to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not take unauthorised leave in term time</li> <li>• Consider quarantine requirements and FCO advice when booking travel</li> <li>• Provide information to school as per attendance policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Returning from a destination where quarantine is needed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Whole household self-isolates for 14 days – even if they test negative during those 14 days</li> </ul>	<p><b>...when the quarantine period of 14 days has been completed for the child, even if they test negative during those 14 days</b></p>
 <p>...we have received advice from a medical / official source that my child must resume shielding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Contact school as advised by attendance officer / pastoral team</li> <li>• Child should shield until you are informed that restrictions are lifted and shielding is paused again</li> </ul>	<p><b>...when school / other agencies inform you that restrictions have been lifted and your child can return to school again</b></p>
 <p>....I am not sure who should get a test for COVID -19 (coronavirus)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only people with symptoms* need to get a test</li> <li>• People without symptoms are not advised to get a test, even if they are a 'close contact' of someone who tests positive</li> </ul>	<p><b>...when conditions above, as matching your situation, are met</b></p>

**For further information:**  
[gmhscp.contacttracing@nhs.net](mailto:gmhscp.contacttracing@nhs.net)  
[gov.uk/backtoschool](http://gov.uk/backtoschool)

## **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