

Attendance Policy

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Aim

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and it is also essential in order for students 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 to encourage students to attend school every day (190 days per year) and to be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Key personnel

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

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Link The SLT link for attendance is Mrs Karen Clinton

Attendance Officer The Attendance Officer is Mrs Nicola Austin

Student Support Officer The Student Support Officer is Ms Charlie Weeks

House Teams monitor students with low levels of attendance

ESBAS (Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Services) Priory school will seek support and advice to support families to improve attendance

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 student 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 students of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll. In addition, lesson registers are taken each lesson.

Responsibilities

The school will ensure that:

- Students are registered accurately and efficiently.
- First day absence calls are made.
- Attendance targets are set for individual students and year groups.
- Attendance and punctuality data is regularly reviewed.

Students are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and be registered punctually.
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences.

The **Parents or Guardians** will:

- Ensure good attendance (97% and above)
- Inform the school on each day of absence and give specific reason.
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance and seek the appropriate leave of absence in good time.

School Day:

- The school day for students begins at 8.30am — by this time all students should be on the school's premises and in Tutor Rooms.
- The registration period begins at 8.30am
- Students entering the school premises after the main gates are closed are late for school;
- The school day ends at 15.15pm.
- The school operates a 5 stage Attendance Procedure with various levels of staff intervening as the level of concern/absence increases.

Form Tutors:

- have the responsibility of registering students' attendance at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- will ensure that the registers are completed in accordance with the appropriate regulations.
- have a major role to play in encouraging students to be punctual and to attend school each day.
- will check absence notes from parents for their authenticity and will pass them to the Attendance Officer for filing.
- will bring to the attention of the House Head those students who are either late for registration or who are absent;
- are responsible for contacting parents if their tutee has regular or patterns of absence. Support strategies should be employed to resolve any issues.

Attendance Officer:

- will liaise closely with Form Tutors in checking that registers are completed accurately (on SIMS)
- will ensure that the registers are available for scrutiny and for emergencies e.g. for fire drills;
- will ensure that all absence notes are stored in a secure place;
- is responsible for notifying parents of unauthorised absences on those occasions when a student has been absent for three days when no reason has been received from the parents;
- will send an email to all students for whom a reason for absence has not been given.
- will alert the House team of any attendance concerns including patterns and encourage a meeting with the student's parents.
- will participate in attendance meetings and liaise closely with the SLT lead.
- will prepare any relevant paperwork for a referral for ESBAS attendance support.

House Team:

- Will liaise closely with Form Tutors and Attendance Officer to monitor the attendance of students with attendance issues
- Will meet with families to offer support and advice of strategies in an attempt to improve the situation
- Will work with young people and families to set targets which will lead to improved attendance

Student Support Advisor:

- Will liaise closely with Form Tutor, Attendance Officer and House Head
- Will monitor and offer support to young people with persistent/long term absence
- May conduct home visits to students and their families with the aim of supporting child's regular attendance

Punctuality:

- All students are expected to be punctual to school (8.30am) and to lessons.
- Any student who is late to school on more than one occasion in a week must attend a detention with the House Team
- Students arriving late will be marked as late using an L code.
- Students arriving after registers close at the end of Period one will be marked as an unauthorised absence and the absence must be explained by parental contact. This will be coded as a U.

Attendance procedures

- Parents are asked to telephone school before the start of school to notify us of a child's absence.
- Authorised absence, e.g. illness, must be supported by a letter from the parents explaining the reason for the absence
- Students who wish to leave the premises during the school day will be expected to bring a letter from their parents notifying the House Team of the reason.

- Students arriving at school after registration should sign in at the Pastoral Office and should sign out if leaving the premises before the end of the school day.
- Where parents fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the School Attendance Officer will endeavour to contact them.

Unauthorised Absences (U)

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:

- School has not given approval in advance for a student 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
- If a student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether that absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents may not authorise any absence. In cases where parents seem to condone unauthorised absence, school may involve the court officer.
- 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. These are managed by ESBAS.
- Parents will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice (PN) 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 £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 PN has been served with no impact or attendance patterns show chronic poor attendance 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.

Withdrawal from learning

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Parents will be reminded that any savings made by taking a term time holiday are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Applications should be requested before any expenses are committed. Costs already incurred are not considered when a withdrawal from learning is reviewed.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time. All applications for withdrawal must be made, in advance, by the parent. Parents who wish to apply must complete the official request form. This can be collected from reception or downloaded from the school's website. Completed forms should be returned to the school's Attendance Officer at least 14 days before the proposed absence (where possible).

Leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.

In considering the request we will also look at various factors such as:

- The timing of the request: i.e. absences should be avoided during the transition period as students need to settle into their new environment and routines as quickly as possible.
- Students should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. GCSE or any other public examinations.
- Where a student's attendance rate is already below 93% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave.
- The student has a serious work deficit

- Other periods of leave which the student may have had, either during the current or previous academic year
- A leave of absence will not be authorised retrospectively

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence is shown on reports and ultimately school references. Unauthorised absence of ten or more school sessions in a half term can lead to the authority issuing a penalty notice. The fine for unauthorised absence currently stands at £120 per parent per child.

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the student does not return to school on the agreed return date. Readmission cannot be guaranteed.

The specific circumstances which outline when a student can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010 and 2013)

Monitoring attendance:

- Truancy Call is used to inform parents/carers of any absence after am registration
- The Attendance Officer will provide analyses of attendance on request.
- The SLT lead for attendance will meet with Attendance Officer regularly (at least twice per term) to discuss attendance issues and to highlight individual students. Students with attendance below 90% can expect to be subject to close monitoring and intervention
- Students will be rewarded for excellent attendance via the school's rewards system.
- Students who attend punctually each week will be rewarded via the schools system.
- The Headteacher will inform all Governors of the school's response to its attendance target on a termly basis at the Full Governors meeting.

- The SLT lead will regularly analyse the data accumulated to identify patterns of concerns. Break downs showing key groups of students will also be included and strategies discussed with the Attendance officer, House Heads and Tutors.

Partnerships:

The SLT lead will attend the local Behaviour and Attendance Panel meeting to ensure that all needs for support are being addressed. Evidence of good practice will be sought and attempts made to apply relevant strategies.

Partnerships with parents will be encouraged as early as possible after an issue has been observed. Early intervention should enable support to be provided before the issue has a chance to grow in significance.

Parents will be encouraged to use INSIGHT to monitor their child's attendance.

Attendance and punctuality will be a focus of Family information evenings for all year groups.

Related Documents

- [Individual Attendance Support Plan 2016](#)
- [Withdrawal from learning application for exceptional circumstances](#)

Related Policies

- [Lewes District Schools' Joint Attendance Policy](#)
- [Access to Education During Absence on Medical Grounds Policy](#)
- [Behaviour for Learning Policy](#)
- [Anti-Bullying Policy](#)

