THE PRIORY PRIMARY ACADEMY TRUST	DATE AGREED	October 2024
POLICY AND PROCEDURE STATEMENT	REVISION DATE	November 2025

The Priory Primary School

Attendance Policy

HEAD TEACHER	MATT WALSH
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS	PRUBIE SAHOTA

Edits and Changes

October 2024	Updated doc in line with September 2024 DfE statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' - Section 3 - Roles and responsibilities of school and parents added - Section 5 reasons for approving absence requests - Section 7 - updated attendance monitoring - Appendix 2 added for email templates

Contents

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Inclusion, achievement and Curriculum governing committee will monitor and asses the ongoing attendance throughout the school year and will report back to the wider governing body with their findings.

3.1 The School

Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.

Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.

Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.

Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.

Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.

Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Be the dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.

3.3 The officer manager (school attendance officer)

The school's office manager will:
- Take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

3.4 The school's DSL / Pastoral Lead
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

3.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.6 Parents

Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.

Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).

Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.

Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an 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 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
- 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 keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am (KS2) and 8.40am (KS1) on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 8.45am The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.15am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

The parent/ carer should contact the school office via phone, if there is no answer they should leave a message on the answer phone or call back soon after.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, 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.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

In this regard, parents should call the school office or send an email to the (admin) / office email.

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.

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

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Pupils who are regularly late will be contacted by the school to explain the reasons for the late punctuality – this contact will be (in the first instance) by the office manager and if there is no improvement in punctuality then the headteacher will request a meeting. If this does not improve the situation a formal concern letter will be written from the headteacher to the parents. Information about ongoing poor attendance will be shared with any future school.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:
- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by phone initially, then email.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will report the children's annual attendance to parents via the end of the school year report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

> The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if the pupil is: a) taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad

> b) attending an interview

> c) Study leave

> d) A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable:

> e) they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

> A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as any situation that cannot be arranged for outside of school hours or is an occasion that could be considered a truly rare experience, unique occurrence, or once in a life time opportunity.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils 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

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Where attendance remains low (initially 90% or lower over a term / two terms / year), the school's office manager will contact the parents to share the school's initial concerns (using the template in Appendix 2) regarding attendance. If this does not result in improved attendance, and attendance continues to fall then the headteacher will request a formal meeting of concern. If this action does not result in improved attendance then a formal letter of concern will be written to the parents. If again this has not improved the attendance then the school will contact the local authority to report the persistent absence and consider legal sanctions.

* Explained medical absence is not considered persistent absence.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Priory promotes attendance by awarding those children who have had 99+% attendance with a certificate of achievement.

7. Attendance monitoring

The office manager at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee and parents will be sent an email (appendix 2) requesting improvement.

The school collects attendance data via its information management system, Arbor. The data is used to:

- Track attendance of individual pupils

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absence may be a cause for concern.

- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

School attendance will be monitored half termly and compared with national national attendance data through the DfE website at the View Your Education Data portal. School attendance compared with national data will be analysed down to pupil group level and shared with governors through termly Headteacher reports.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2 - School communications related to attendance

Persistent absence

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to you with concern about your child's attendance. When a pupil's attendance goes below 90% it is classified as persistent absence and this is a cause for concern as this absence will be having a detrimental effect on your child's education. I am sure there are valid reasons for this absence and we are happy to work with you to improve your child's attendance to at least above 90%.

In the first instance, please speak to your child's class teacher(s) if s/he is having issues with coming to school. Following this, if you would like to discuss your child's attendance with me, I will be happy to meet you. Please contact the school office at Office@priory.hants.sch.uk .

Persistent lateness

Dear Parent/Carer of ___,

We have noticed that last year ___ was late arriving at school on a number of occasions in the morning. If a pupil arrives at school after the register closes this is recorded as an absence.

We know that mornings can be difficult for some pupils, and we are keen to help to improve their attendance.

We would like to talk to you to discuss avenues for support to help _____ attend school well.

Please contact the school office at office@priory.hants.sch.uk or 01256850062 to make an appointment or arrange a phone call with Mr Walsh.