

Attendance policy

Priory Junior School



Approved by: D and P Committee

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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. We have a link Governor to support the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership team in monitoring attendance and tackling poor 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

3.3 The Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Governing Body
- Works with external agencies if appropriate to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Decides when to issue fixed-penalty notices according to the school's attendance policy

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, through an electronic register system on Scholar Pack and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system, using the correct codes. They will alert the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team to attendance concerns so that the attendance procedure can be effectively followed. (See appendix 2 for attendance procedure flowchart)

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 9 am

The register for the morning session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.25pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). The usual method for notification is by text or call.

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. The useful method for communicating this information would be via call to the school office, text or e-mail and wherever possible evidence of the appointment should be obtained.

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 late after register closed until 9.30, lateness after that will be recorded as an absence for that session using the appropriate code.

Lateness is recorded on our Scholar Pack system. Lateness concerns which lead to a punctuality letter being sent to parents/ carers or if a parent/carer meeting is held to discuss lateness will also be recorded on our CPOMS system. Lateness is monitored over a half term and if there is a recorded lateness of 6 or more over the half term then a letter is issued to parents/carers. Any continued lateness after this letter would result in a parents/carer meeting being held with a member of the senior leadership to discuss the barriers causing the lateness and to put in place strategies to improve punctuality.

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 in the first instance a text message and then by call if there is no response by the admin team. If no response is received the admin team will alert a member of the senior leadership team so they can decide on next actions to:

➤ 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

Our school reports to parents on their child's attendance record. This is done annually in the written end of 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 they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unforeseeable or unpreventable events or circumstances outside your control which have a negative impact on your ability to ensure your child's attendance at school.

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

We have a school procedure for targeting unauthorised and persistent absence (see flowchart in appendix 2.) Within a half term if unauthorised absence is at 90% or below we would issue a letter to parents/carers to highlight the attendance issues and to request that parents/carers work to improve further attendance. After the issuing of a letter after a 2 weekly monitoring window the admin team will alert the senior leadership team if attendance has not improved or if during the next half term attendance improves but then begins to decline again. A parent/carer meeting would then be held with a member of the senior leadership team using materials from the ATTEND framework to discuss the attendance issues, identify barriers to attendance and work collaboratively to put strategies in place to tackle poor attendance. We will also monitor the attendance of pupils who have dropped to 90% or below where the absence is authorised as we may be able to support parents/carers with any ongoing issues that are leading to the authorised absences.

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.

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 and Priory Junior school will fine in certain circumstances

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
- 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 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.

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

6. Attendance monitoring

The Senior Leadership Team at our school monitors pupil absence on a fortnightly basis with our admin team and our attendance Governor monitors attendance on a half termly 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).

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.

Pupil-level absence 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 will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Attendance data is collected through our Scholar Pack and CPOMS system. We use this to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absence may be a cause for concern such as children eligible for pupil premium or children with special educational needs.
- Monitor and evaluate those children and families identified as being in need of intervention and support.
- Collate data to share with Governors in a attendance update as part of the termly Head Teacher report to Governors.

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 senior leadership team and the Development and Planning Governor Committee. 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
- Reduced timetable and Children Missing from Education policy and procedure

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	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 – PJS Attendance and punctuality procedure

Priory Junior School Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Procedure 2022 -2023

This flowchart is a comprehensive overview of our procedure. Further detail can be found in the attendance and punctuality policy. Our attendance link Governor is Carol Chadwick

Register procedures for attendance and punctuality

School bell rings at 9am for morning session

Class teacher takes register on Scholar Pack **at 9am. By 9.10am at the latest** any child who is not present the teacher will mark **as absent**. If children **arrive between 9am and 9.10am** the teacher will mark the child as **late**.

After 9.10am the admin team will add any children to the registers who were late after the registers closed arriving through the reception. They will also check the text and phone system for messages from parent/carers regarding children's absences and code these according to appendix 1 of the attendance and punctuality policy. If they are unsure as to how to code the absence the admin team will check with a member of the SLT.

If no message has been received regarding a child's absence by **9.30am** the admin team will text to enquire as to the reason for absence – if they do not get a response, then a call will be made as well. **If by 10 am** no reason for absence has been confirmed the admin team will notify a member of SLT.

School bell rings at 1.15pm for afternoon session

Class teacher takes register on Scholar Pack **at 1.15pm. By 1.25pm at the latest** any child who is not present the teacher will mark **as absent**. If children **arrive between 1.15pm and 1.25pm** the teacher will mark the child as **late**.

Requests for absence during term time

If staff receive requests from parent/carers for a leave of absence during term **time this must be passed on to a member of the SLT or parent/carers told by staff to e-mail their request to the office e-mail**. The SLT and Governors will decide as to whether to allow the absence and whether it will be authorised based on a case-by-case basis and whether to issue a fine at that point.

Attendance and punctuality monitoring

Issue - within a half term if unauthorised absence is at 90% or below or there are more than 6 lates

Action – parent/carer issued with attendance/punctuality concern letter

Further Action During the admin team/SLT 2 weekly monitoring meeting we will highlight any continuing issues where there is no evidence of improvements. This will then be escalated to a parent/carer meeting with a SLT member using the ATTEND framework materials to try to put in strategies to resolve the attendance/punctuality issues.