



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Approved	/ /
To be reviewed	/ /
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
Signed (Proprietor)	

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.

Priory Park Community School understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and that we all have a role in keeping children safe. Regular and consistent communication is made between parents/carers and school to convey clear messages on the effects of poor attendance on attainment and well-being.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance on Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024.

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 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the:

- school census guidance
- Keeping Child Safe in Education

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.

3.2 The Head of School

The Head of School 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
- Being the Designated Senior Leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school

3.3 The Leadership Team

The Leadership Team is responsible for:

- Meeting with the Attendance Welfare Officer on a regular basis to monitor the school attendance of all students.

3.4 The Attendance Welfare Officer

The Attendance Welfare Officer Sarah Dixon is responsible for:

- Completing first day contact calls, texts and emails
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
- Report concerns about attendance to the Headteacher and Senior Leaders
- Tackles attendance issues and persistent absentees through various actions including but not limited to letters, home visits, meeting with parents and professionals.
- Keeps detailed records of all communication
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Set high expectation for the attendance and punctuality of all students and communicate these regularly to students and parents through all available channels
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues
- Work with outside agencies, professionals, and families to treat the root cause of absence and remove any barriers to attendance.
- To work as Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. At Priory Park Community School we recognise that School Attendance is Safeguarding.
- Record significant attendance concerns and actions on CPOMs.
- To implement the statutory Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance as a matter of daily practice.

3.5 Class Teacher / Form Tutors / Non-Teaching Staff

The Class Teacher / Form Tutor / Non-Teaching Staff are responsible for:

- Know and understand the importance of good attendance and consistently promote this in their communication with students and parents.

3.6 School administrator

The School administrator is responsible for:

- School administrator is expected to take calls from parents about absence and record all communication on the Sims system.

3.7 Parent/Carer Responsibilities

The Parent/Carer is responsible for:

- Parents/Carers must telephone Priory Park Community School on the first day of absence and subsequent days thereafter
- If an absence is longer than two days or parents have received an Attendance Concern Letter medical evidence must be provided to authorise absence due to illness.
- Medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours, whenever possible. If this is not possible, the absence will only be authorised when the appointment card / letter is shown. The student should return to school immediately after the appointment, unless advised otherwise by a medical professional.
- If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance, then talk to us as a first step.

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at 12pm for the second session.

Priory Park Community School starts at 9am and finishes at 2pm.

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student'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 3.7).

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 student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

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 Lateness and punctuality

A student 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 an unauthorised, using the appropriate code.

The school opens at 9am for all year groups. Registers will be marked on the student's arrival at reception.

Registers at Priory Park Community School close at 10am. This time has been set with the understanding of some of our students' complex needs. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after this time, they may receive a 'U' mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark, and it will mean they have an authorised absence.

4.4 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 call / text / email
- Ensure safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use
- Complete home visits when deemed necessary
- Inform any relevant professionals

4.5 Reporting to parents

- Parents/carers will receive a termly report which includes attendance figures.
- Parents/carers will receive a termly email which will include their young persons Attendance Summary, our Attendance Promise and our School Attendance – its Everyone's Responsibility
- Parents/carers will receive weekly emails to celebrate Attendance and Punctuality – these includes Gold/Silver/Bronze Award, 100% for the Year, 100% for the Term and Parent of the Week
- Parents/carers will be invited to attend a Termly Celebration Afternoon where Attendance and Punctuality will be celebrated

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head of School will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head of School's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as bereavement, urgent travel.

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

5.2 Term Time Holidays

In line with DFE guidance Priory Park Community School will not grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are "exception circumstances. Therefore, any requests for term-time holidays or other absences for the purpose of leisure and recreation will not be authorised and any such absences will be referred to the Local Authority.

If unauthorised leave during term time is taken, PPCS will consider issuing a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child that is taken out of school. The National Framework for Penalty Notices 2024 sets out that Penalty Notices for leave of absence in term time are payable at £160 if paid within 28 days and £80 if paid within 21 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at £80. A national limit of two penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another tool must be considered (such as prosecution or another attendance legal interventions).

Please be aware that new legislation does not allow schools to authorise any holidays in term time or authorise leave retrospectively.

5.3 Reducing persistent absence

Priory Park Community School will monitor all individual student attendance daily and target unauthorised absences with meetings, letters, home visits, information sharing with relevant professionals and referrals to the School Attendance and Education Support Service at Dudley Local Authority if appropriate.

5.4 Legal Sanctions

Legal sanctions

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period

- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence recorded by schools after 19th August 2024.

National threshold: There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

Who may be fined?

Penalty notices may be issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent from school. However, they Page 10 of 25 should usually only be issued to the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

First offence

The first time a penalty notice is issued, the fine amount will be £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within the first 21 days.

Second offence (within 3 years)

The second time a penalty notice is issued, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child, payable within 28 days. The lower rate is not an option.

Third offence and any further offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed, a penalty notice will not be issued and local authorities will need to consider other available measures to address the absence concerns. Parents found guilty of an offence under s444 (Education Act 1996) can be fined up to £2,500 and will have a criminal conviction. Add national threshold for penalty fines.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Rewards for punctuality and attendance will be awarded on a weekly, termly and yearly basis.

Priory Park Community School will praise and reward consistently good and improving attendance and punctuality.

The Attendance Welfare Officer, together with the Leadership Team, are continually seeking new and innovative ways of improving, maintaining, and celebrating good attendance. The team regularly updates staff on attendance issues and ensures that students are fully informed on all procedures and consequences of non-attendance at school.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Welfare Officer at Priory Park Community School monitors student absence on a daily basis.

If a student's absent, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Student-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.

8. Suspensions

- Suspension and Permanent exclusion will be used sparingly and kept for the most serious of unacceptable behaviour
 - Suspension and Permanent exclusion (which shuts students out from learning) is a serious punishment and must be used only after due consideration and consultation
 - Suspension and Permanent exclusion must be based on a careful consideration thorough investigation of objective evidence, clearly documented
 - Suspension and Permanent exclusion must be considered and non-retributive
 - Suspension and Permanent exclusion should not be reactive
 - A fair hearing will be given to all parties (right of appeal will be notified in writing where appropriate)
- Students will not lose the opportunity to take public exams at the discretion of the Governing Body. Only the Head of School has the power to exclude a student from school. This would include someone designated as the acting Headteacher in the absence of the Head of School.
- The Head of School cannot routinely, or on an ad hoc basis, delegate the power to exclude to another teacher.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by the Head of School with support from the Attendance Welfare Officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Contact Details

Priory Park Community School, Meadow Road, Dudley, DY1 3JY

- Mr Tim Hucknall, Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance. 01384 813640.

- Sarah Dixon, Attendance Welfare Officer. 01384 813640.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour and Relationships Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
I	Illness (NOT appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration)

P	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
D	Dual registered (at another establishment - NOT counted in possible attendance
X	Not required to be in school - for non-compulsory school age children
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

