

PRIORY WOODS SCHOOL AND ARTS COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Adopted by: Priory Woods School

Date: 28th March 2018



ATTENDANCE POLICY 2017 - 2018

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so
- 1.2 As from September 2013, parents no longer have the right to request leave of absence for their children for an annual holiday. The amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration Regulations make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.3 1.3 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which children are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 Authorised absence
 - An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent telephones the school or writes a note to explain the absence.
 - Children who are not well should not be at school even if they are not infectious
 - Children with sickness and diarrhoea should not be in school unless the sickness or diarrhoea is known to be due a non-infectious disease (i.e. coeliac disease). This rule also applies to staff, including catering staff. In individual cases, children must not return to school until 48 hours after their last bout of sickness or diarrhoea.
 - Some children may have other illnesses which affect their immunity (e.g. Leukaemia, HIV disease). The parents of these children should be warned if there are known to be cases of infectious diseases in the school, especially if children are off school with chickenpox, shingles or measles.

- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without good reason (i.e. without the permission of the school) even if the parent is supporting the absence.

3. If a child is absent

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher records the absence using the electronic register which informs the secretary, and a staff member endeavours to contact a parent or carer as soon as possible.
- 3.2 Parents or carers are encouraged to telephone the school by 9.10am on the first day of non-attendance. If contact has not been made, school will contact a parent/carer to establish the reason for the absence. We always welcome a telephone call or note from home to explain the absence.
- 3.3 A telephone call or a note may be sent to the school prior to the day of a planned absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

4 Requests for leave of absence

- 4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are really exceptional circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event such as a wedding or funeral. We expect parents to contact the school at least two weeks in advance when circumstances allow.
- 4.2 From September 2013, parents no longer have the right to request leave of absence for their children for an annual holiday.
- 4.3 The amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration Regulations make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. We recognise that the employment of parents and carers can impact on choices regarding holidays; if holidays are dictated by the employer (e.g. for armed forces or emergency services personnel), rather than just availability of holidays as part of an employer's rota this will be considered. Written proof from the employer will be required; this could include the holiday allocation policy and dates allocated for the year in question. If there are exceptional circumstances the Head Teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
- 4.4 Each request will be judged on its own merits. The Absence Request Form is available from school or the School Website.

Attendance Concerns

If a pupil's attendance is causing concerns, the Head Teacher or representative should discuss the pupil with the class teacher and where possible see the parents. Parents should be encouraged to visit school to discuss attendance and strategies for improvement. It is important to establish reasons for poor attendance, the general health of the child, home circumstances etc. A target should be set for the pupil's attendance, which is higher than the normal attendance by that pupil. A date for review of attendance should be set, no more than 4 weeks later. A record should be kept of all contacts and relevant conversations.

If attendance does not improve, options may include;

- contacting parents to discuss the review and set a further date
- discuss with the parents areas of concern and where support may be available.

- A referral to the Education Welfare Officer. Referral to EWS will only be accepted subject to completion of the referral form.

Long-term absence.

Any long term absence taken without approval will be recorded as an unauthorised and the Headteacher will decide on the appropriate action to take. This will be: an informal discussion / dialogue with the parents / carers; a formal written warning or the issue of a Penalty Notice (with the support of the Educational Welfare Service). A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 issued to each parent if paid between 1 - 21 days after issue, increasing to £120 if paid between 21 - 28 days. If payment is not received within 28 days you may be prosecuted for the offence of non-school attendance under Section 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 and could be fined up to £2500 and / or receive a prison sentence of up to three months. Note: the school does not issue or administer Penalty Notices and, once issued, has no powers over their enforcement.

In the case of the students who are post 16 the situation is different as there is no legal requirement for them to attend.

Completing Registers

Registers are legal documents and must be completed properly and accurately. When a pupil is absent without an explanation, that will be recorded by an "O" entry, as an unauthorised absence. If acceptable evidence is subsequently forthcoming, it is very important that an entry is made within the "O", to avoid the pupil's (and the school's) unauthorised absence figures from appearing incorrectly high. ('M' for medical and illness, 'H' for holidays, 'R' for religious observances, 'X' for other circumstances.)

Class teachers - should follow the procedures already outlined to ensure that all absences are checked out. If no explanation can be obtained 7 days after the pupil's return to school, then it must be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If any person has problems with attendance issues please see the Head Teacher.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed as required.

Signed:

Date: