



# **Attendance Policy and Procedures**

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**Produced by staff, shared with parents and pupils, reviewed annually**  
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## **Statement of Intent**

The importance of regular school attendance cannot be overestimated. Regular attendance is vital to a good education. Securing it is therefore be a high priority of the Pentland Primary School, its governors, parents and the pupils themselves. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils lessen the impact of the education provided for them. Pupil absence may seriously disrupt the continuity of teaching for themselves and others.

The aim of the school is to facilitate their student's regular and sustained attendance at school by providing a full and efficient educational experience for all their students.

All partners have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

## **School Attendance the Statutory Framework**

Education Act 1944 - Establishes the duty of parents to ensure regular attendance of pupils.

Pupil's Registration Regulations 1986 - Establishes the criteria for the maintenance of Attendance Registers.

Education Act 1996 places a legal obligation on the Local Education Authority to provide education suitable to a child's age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs they may have and also Section 444 states that "The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law".

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1997 (amended) provides the new registration categories of Approved Educational Activity. (Amending Regulation 3(2), (3), (5) of the Education Regulations 1995).

The [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) currently allow headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Education Act 2002 (Section 53) enables an overall absence target to be set, covering authorised and unauthorised absence, supporting school improvement and raising community awareness of the issue (September 2003).

## **Children Missing From Education**

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education July 2015, any child who is missing will be reported to the relevant authorities (Local Authority lead, Police, Social Services) after 10 days. During this time, school will do all in its power to trace the child.

## Registration

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of **each morning and afternoon sessions, pupils are marked present or absent.** The Education (Pupils' Attendance Record) Regulations 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is **authorised or unauthorised.** This is done electronically.

Both staff and pupils see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day, as was indeed intended in law; to this end, pupils often "take the register". Particular attention is paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers; paper copies of absences are kept as a record.

Monitoring and encouraging attendance is an integral part of the **teacher's role.** They have primary responsibility for monitoring the attendance of students in the tutor group, for collecting notes explaining absences, for maintaining an accurate register and for contacting home with concerns about attendance and punctuality.

Teachers all use the symbols shown in Table 1 for marking registers. This is in line with Stockton on Tees Local Education Authority's requirements.

In accordance with current legislation, each Class in school has an attendance register. It is school policy that registers are completed by 9.05am and 1.05pm for KS1/FS and 1.20pm for KS2; the register is then saved (and can be accessed centrally.)

It is our policy to record **a late mark for children who arrive at school after class registration has taken place,** but before the close of the registers at 9.15am.

We believe that pupils arriving late seriously disrupt their work and that of others. Our policy is to **encourage punctuality.** Five minutes will be allocated for registration purposes at the beginning of each session. Students will be recorded as being late once registration has taken place.

It is school's policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional public transport difficulties), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period.

For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival.

Where a pupil does arrive and misses registration, his or her presence on site will need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation.

Anyone arriving late must enter their name in the Late Book which is kept outside the office. Where a pupil arrives late after close of registration, unless of exceptional circumstances they will be recorded as U in register (late after registration closed) this is an unauthorised absence.

In responding to lateness, we will of course, take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances, enquiries may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. Teachers of pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time with valid reason need to keep the Attendance Co-ordinator informed. Further action may be taken if there is no valid reason for this lateness.

## Registration Procedure

Registers will be completed as quickly as convenient, preceding both daily sessions. Only 5 minutes of the school day have been allocated for the registration procedure. Registers will be saved and shut down immediately after they are taken.

Pupils present will be so marked by a diagonal line.

Pupils not present will be so marked by an N.

## Late

Pupils arriving at school after registration (9.05am) in the mornings must report to the school administrator who will adjust the entry in the class register by applying a 'u'. This will be interpreted in the class register as a child present at school having arrived late after registration. This constitutes attendance for Health and Safety purposes but is an **unauthorised absence for statistical purpose.**

## Absence

Once the school receives an acceptable reason for an absence, it will be authorised by inserting the correct symbol. Reporting by telephone, verbally to a member of staff or a note are all acceptable.

If **after three weeks** no satisfactory reason has been given the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

A list of symbols used for demarcating AUTHORISED absence is included in Table 1.

**Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents.** The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to agree to it. If the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or where no explanation is forthcoming at all the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally-condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil, school will involve the LA Attendance Officer at an early opportunity.

Occasionally, there are instances where there is an excessive amount of authorised absence; this can also seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage disaffection; the school will be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence. The school may authorise absence retrospectively where satisfied as to the explanation offered. **Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised.**

**Our policy deals in general with the categories of absence and cannot cover every eventuality. It will be necessary, on occasion, to exercise reasonable discretion when investigating some absences.**

## Key Points

- Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required, by law, to be in school.
- Whilst it is right that schools should recognise that individual pupils and families have problems, the aim should always be to expect regular attendance.
- Lateness is actively discouraged.

- Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation, an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason), the absence must be treated as unauthorised and the register annotated accordingly.
- Schools are not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered.
- Explanations such as minding the house, looking after other children, or shopping trips within school hours will not be accepted as reasons for absence.

## **Authorised Absence**

Guidance from the Government has been altered (September 2013) so that Head Teachers do not have the power to authorise term-time absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents no longer have an automatic right to demand holidays for their children. As the school (and Local Authority) are well below national figures for absence through term-time holiday, the Governors have agreed to use Fixed Penalty Notices if parents take out children for term-time holiday when the school has not authorised the absence.

When considering the validity of the exceptional circumstances, a group of governors will support the head teacher in the decision making process. This is to ensure that the process is fair, open and equitable. A response to an application for absence will be made within 10 working days.

Even in exceptional circumstances, the school will not authorise term-time holiday for children who attendance over the previous year has caused concerns (under 95%).

**Our policy deals in general with the categories of absence and cannot cover every eventuality.**

## **Attendance Procedures**

Much is done in school to raise the profile of good attendance and the benefits of punctuality. The following strategies are used:

- Rewards – the class with the best attendance each week gets to choose from a menu of rewards – this will be reviewed regularly to keep it fresh
- Termly certificates are issued for children with 100% attendance
- Yearly certificates are issued for children with 100% attendance – and displayed
- Attendance issues are raised in the school newsletter to maintain the profile
- Teachers and the Head Teacher support families where ever possible.

## **Intervention at School Level**

### **Stage 1 - Monitor**

This section describes the role of school in relation to improving attendance.

- 1.1 The Class Teacher or Form Tutor has primary responsibility for monitoring attendance of the pupils in the class group and for collecting notes explaining absences, maintaining an accurate register and contacting home with concerns about attendance and punctuality.
- 1.2 After the close of Registers, the school office will begin the First Response procedure where children who are absent without known reason are contacted; this is to ensure, in the first case, that they are safe.

- 1.3 The Class Teacher or Form Tutor can do much to encourage regular attendance and punctuality. If a teacher is concerned about absence, then the pupil is referred to the Head Teacher.

***Children who attendance falls below 95% will be closely monitored.***

**Stage 2 - Attendance Concerns**

- 2.1 Home will be contacted, preferably by phone, or by letter if this is not possible. In the first instance this will be done by the class teacher because they are most likely to have the best relationship/most pertinent knowledge
- 2.2 A record should be kept of all contact and conversations. Chronologies should be kept.
- 2.3 Parents/carers are encouraged to visit school to discuss attendance and strategies for improvement – it is important to establish the reasons for poor attendance (general health, home circumstances etc).
- 2.4 Through the discussions, a target to help improve the attendance will be agreed
- 2.5 A date for review of attendance will be set, no more than 4 weeks later.
- 2.6 If attendance has improved, then a letter of commendation will be sent home and pupil returns to STAGE 1.
- 2.7 If attendance has not improved, then options may include:
- (i) Contact home to discuss the review and set a further review date.
  - (ii) Discuss with their parent areas of concerns and where other support might be appropriate.
- 2.8 A prioritised list of pupils will be referred to the Attendance Service if appropriate.

**Referral to Attendance Officer**

Details of the procedure followed by the Attendance Service may be found in the Local Education Authority's Attendance Procedures Document.

When making a referral to the school's Attendance Officer, it is important that the following information is included:

- Action taken to date by the school.
- A print out of the pupil's attendance.
- Parent's/pupil's attitudes towards school and the school's intervention.
- Parental reasons for non-attendance.
- Action taken by school to resolve any identified problems.
- Information regarding any special educational needs the pupil may have, academic attainments and support being provided by the school.
- Information regarding potential aggression from the parents.

***Please note that this stands whilst the Local Authority is able to offer this service to schools.***

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Pupils**

We expect that students:

- Will attend school regularly.
- Will arrive on time.

- Will be prepared for the demands of that day.
- Will inform a member of staff of any problems they are experiencing which may impinge on their ability to attend school and access their education.

### Parents/Carers

We expect parents/carers to ensure:

- Their child attends school.
- They contact school on their child's first day of absence, advising of the reasons for absence.
- Their child arrives at school punctually.
- Their child is appropriately dressed and properly equipped for the day.

### TARGETS FOR ATTENDANCE

We aim to be at least in line with national averages of attendance – 96%. Our weekly target shared with the children is slightly above this.

## Appendix - Table 1 - Symbols for Marking Registers

### Symbols for Marking the Register

#### Present

Present ( AM )	/
Present ( PM)	\
Home & Hospital Teaching	B
Present part -time/temporary education off-site/Support Unit	B
Educational Visit	V
Work Experience	W
Interview	J
Late before the close of Registration	L
Approved Sporting Activity	P

#### Authorised Absence

Illness ( Not medical or dental appointments )	I
Hospital, medical, dental, pregnancy	M
Annual Parental Holiday	H
Religious Festivals	R
Exclusions	E
Study Leave	S
Traveller Absence	T
Other circumstances (reason must be recorded by form tutor)	C

#### Unauthorised Absence

No Reason Provided/Truancy From School	O
Late After the Close of Registration	U
Reason Not Yet Provided	N

**Symbols used but not counted in Figures**

Pupils not in school - Staff Only	X
School Closed for Holiday	#
Enforced School Closure	Y
Attendance Not Required	!

**Appendix Two – Absence Application Form**

**Absence Application Form** This is in line with LA guidance. It is also available on the school website.

**PARENTAL NOTIFICATION FOR TERM TIME LEAVE**

**NAME OF CHILD** ..... **CLASS**

.....

THE ABOVE NAMED CHILD(REN) WILL BE ABSENT FROM PENTLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

From ..... To .....

Please state total number of SCHOOL days absent

.....

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 under new regulations, schools are **no longer allowed to authorise leave of absence for family holidays**. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for students during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Below is the reference to the Government website where this is outlined:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

Please give details if you consider this term time leave qualifies as exceptional circumstances:

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Signature of Parent/Guardian ..... Date.....

Please print name .....