



Attendance Policy

PRESTON CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Agreed by Governing Body: 14 September 2020

Headteacher: *C Payne*

Chair of Governors: *J. Bennett*

Date for review: **Autumn 2023**

(Review to be undertaken in the event that Covid-19 measures incorporated in this policy are no longer in place)

Statement of intent

Preston CE VC Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

Preston CE VC Primary School is committed to:

- Following the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:
“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:-

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (including 2013 and 2016 amendments)

1.2. This policy also has due regard to statutory DfE guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

School attendance parental responsibility measures; Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police Ref: DFE-00256-2013 (updated Jan 2017)

2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. The **governing body** has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and procedures of Preston Nethergate CE VC Primary School
- 2.2. The **governing body** has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 2.3. The **governing body** has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's complaints policy.
- 2.4. The **headteacher** is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and procedures of the school.
- 2.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- 2.6. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time and this is made clear in the home/school agreement.
- 2.7. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.

3. Definitions

3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- **“Absence”** as:
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Not attending school for any reason.
- An **“authorised absence”** as:
 - An absence for sickness, accepted as valid by the school.
 - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
 - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
 - An absence due to a family emergency.

- An absence due to an exceptional circumstance, agreed by the headteacher, that falls outside of the above categories.
- An “**unauthorised absence**” as:
 - Parents keeping children off school for a reason other than those included in the ‘authorised’ categories above.
 - Truancy before or during the school day.
 - Absences which have never been properly explained.
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
 - A medical absence not viewed as valid by the school – see Appendix A: *Joint Protocol between Health Services & Schools in respect of the management of pupil absence from school when medical reasons are cited (NSCB)*
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- “**Persistent absenteeism**” as:
 - Missing **10 percent** or more of schooling across the year **for any reason**.

4. **Training of staff**

- 4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers and office staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.
- 4.2. This training will be included in whole-staff safeguarding training, updated regularly.
- 4.3. Staff will be made aware of their duty to report concerns around attendance of individual pupils.

5. **Absence procedures**

- 5.1. Parents/carers are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- 5.2. On the first day that a child returns to school, parents/carers are required to provide a written note or email confirming the reason for absence; this is required even if the parent has already contacted the school via phone call.
- 5.3. Alternatively, parents/carers may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.

- 5.4. A **phone call** will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- 5.5. If the school office receive no answer to phone calls, they will repeat attempts to make contact with the home during the first day and on subsequent days
- 5.6. If there is concern about a lack of explanation and inability to contact home, steps may be taken to pursue other routes of contact. For example, by contacting the school setting of siblings; contacting work numbers; contacting other person's sharing parental responsibility etc.
- 5.7. If no contact has been made by the third day, a letter will be sent by first class post to the home address advising of school concerns. It might be decided that the headteacher or deputy headteacher should make a visit to the home; this should never be carried out alone and should be risk assessed before undertaken.

6. Involvement of the Local Authority

- 6.1 Parents/carers at risk of becoming a persistent absentee will be alerted to this in good time and be invited to speak to the headteacher and/or to the **attendance officer** in order to address this situation. This may take the form of a Fast Track Panel.
- 6.2 If a pupil's attendance drops below **90 percent**, the **attendance officer** may be informed, and a formal meeting may be arranged with the parents to attempt to resolve the situation by agreement.

COVID-19

We remain vigilant about absence whilst recognising that current measures may result in children being absent from school for a greater amount of time than usual. This is because:

- **They may be required to self-isolate due to their own symptoms or illness**
- **They may be required to self-isolate due to symptoms or illness of other members of their household or their 'close contacts'**
- **Parents may be more cautious about sending children to school with non-Covid illness**
- **Parental or child anxiety about the risk of infection**

Where the last point is the reason for absence, the school will work diligently with the family towards ensuring attendance, and punitive measures would be a last resort.

Staff are aware of the appropriate coding for Covid-related absence.

6.3 If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the **attendance officer** has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

6.4 The school recognises that from 1 September 2020, in accordance with the Norfolk County Council Code of Conduct for Issuing Fixed Penalties regarding School Attendance (Sept 2020), the criteria for the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice will be:

- At least 9 sessions (4.5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil in the last 6 weeks

Parents have been advised of this information.

7. Contact information

7.1. Parents are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.

7.2. Parents are responsible for updating the school if the details change.

8. Lateness

8.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

8.2. The school day starts at **8:50am** Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.

8.3. Registers are marked by **9:05am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

8.4. The register closes at **9:20am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.

8.5. After lunch, registers are marked by **1:20pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

8.6. The register closes at **1.30pm** Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

8.7. Pupils attending after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but this will count as a late mark.

COVID-19 MEASURES necessitate a change to the timetable above due to a system of staggered entry and exit times. These have been arranged in a family friendly way with siblings sharing a common time for delivery and collection.

It is expected that children arrive in time for their allotted entry time.

Children may not be able to enter school until the end of the staggered timetable if they miss their allocated time.

The register closes at 9:20am, as above.

For the first weeks of this arrangement there will be some tolerance allowed for adjustment to new routines. Subsequently, a late mark will be awarded if children attend ten minutes or more after their allotted time.

9. Term-time leave

- 9.1. At **Preston** CE VC Primary School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 9.2. The headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time unless evidence is provided that parental leave is completely unavailable during any school holiday period or where exceptional circumstances make it vital for the holiday to be taken in term-time. Where this is the case, other factors will also be considered before authorisation is given, including the child's attendance record, and the maximum leave in this circumstance will be for one full week.
- 9.3. The headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence for other reasons in exceptional circumstances. Applications must be made in advance and the headteacher must be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 9.4. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.
- 9.5. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 9.6. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
 - Immediately before and during assessment periods
 - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
 - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason
- 9.7. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to referral to the local authority and sanctions such as fixed penalty fines (see 6.4 above)

10. Missing children

- 10.1. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the **headteacher** immediately.
 - The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
 - A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the **headteacher**.
 - The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Cloakroom areas
 - The library
 - The Hall
 - The Group Room and the Food Tech Room
 - Staff room/ offices
 - The school grounds, including sheds
 - Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
 - If the pupil has not been found after **10** minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
 - If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, then the police will be contacted.
 - The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- 10.2. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked after child, or has any special educational needs, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 10.3. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.

- 10.4. The **headteacher** will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 10.5. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- 10.6. The **headteacher** will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 10.7. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

11. Religious observances

- 11.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.
- 11.2. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

12. Appointments

- 12.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 12.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the **school office**.
- 12.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the **school office** by a parent.
- 12.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

13. Young carers

- 13.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- 13.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- 13.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

14. Children Missing Education

14.1 The school follows all the requirements of the current Norfolk County Council 'Children Missing Education' Policy (August 2019) which forms Appendix 1 of this policy.

15. Monitoring and review

- 15.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 15.2. The headteacher reports on attendance at each meeting of the Full Governing Body
- 15.3. The school is subject to a Local Authority Register Audit on a regular basis and the outcomes are shared with the governing body; an action plan is drawn up on the basis of outcomes.
- 15.4. This policy is reviewed every three years by the headteacher; the next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2023**.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.