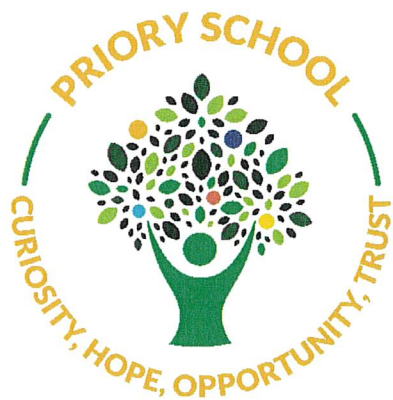




Priory School

Pupil Attendance Policy

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1	FGB	21.11.22	November 2022	November 2023
2	FGB	20.11.23	20.11.23	November 2024

Signed:

Caroline Masih - Chair of Governors

Date: 13/12/23

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Statement of Intent

Priory 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.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

Our vision for attendance is:

The school will relentlessly work towards overcoming barriers to attendance alongside parents to improve overall attendance and reduce persistent absence.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow 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 them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's Attendance administrator is Clarissa Chaulk, and she can be contacted via attendance@prioryschool.com. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the Attendance administrator for queries or concerns about attendance.

Our targets for attendance are:

To improve pupil punctuality and attendance by having clear policies and procedures that engage all stakeholders in the journey to improve attendance

- Improve overall attendance percentage in line with local and national averages.
- Reduce persistent absence down from 30.1%
- Reduce the numbers of children regularly arriving late.

1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to have strategic oversight of attendance.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.

- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The Deputy Head is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

The attendance is responsible for:

- The operational running of the strategic approach to attendance in school
- Carrying out tasks in line with the vision
- Communicate clearly with parents and staff
- Build positive relationships with parents
- Be curious about absence

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave

- 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

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 8:45am, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time. Pupils will have a morning break at staggered times for 15 minutes, and a lunch break at also at staggered times (please see Pupil Handbook) which will last an hour. Pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be taken at 08:45. All children should be in class by this time, if they arrive after this time they will need to sign in at the office. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by 9am. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school.
- The afternoon register will be marked by as they come in from lunch. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

We recognise that absence from school can pose a safeguarding risk for our pupils. We will make sure that our staff, pupils and families understand these risks by:

- information leaflets;
- workshops to raise awareness;
- targeted support;
- briefings by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or other appropriate staff members;
- Supporting letters to parents
- Opportunities to meet with Attendance and welfare administrator and or DDSL
- CPD for staff

5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 08:30 on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day. Parents are also required to call in on every day their child is absent.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by text message or telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than three school days in a row, or more than [10](#) school days in [one term](#), the pupil's parent may be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s) or we may conduct a home visit.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness and the family are subject to an attendance plan.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Attendance administrator. The school will liaise the LA, on a regular basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Please see Attendance intervention escalation plan (Appendix 1) for more details on Attendance procedures.

6. Attendance register

The school uses SIMS system to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival

- C = Leave of absence granted by the school
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Headteacher or delegated to the deputy head with oversight for attendance – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The Headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the Headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

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. Where the absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory 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

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The Headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the Headteacher – it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The Headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision.

Where permission has been granted, the Headteacher will ensure a photo lunchtime pass is printed for the pupil and will include the pupil's name on the off-site register.

Pupils will leave the school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The Headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the Headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the Headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a 6 weekly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

10. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8:45am and immediately after end of assigned lunchtime, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

11. Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. 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 or SLT 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 or SLT.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - The library
 - Any intervention rooms
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a radio and go to the emergency channel (1) with them so they can be contacted. The DHT or HT will coordinate the search over the radio.
- Parents of the pupil may be notified.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, 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.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The Headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

12. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Deputy Head with responsibility for attendance will

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.

- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Having a weekly review.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating attendance clinics.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Weekly recognition of 100% attendance in phased assemblies.
- Class attendance is announced every week in the newsletter, the highest class receives extra play as agreed with their class teacher.

We will implement a range of strategies to support pupils and families who require this. Examples include:

- Meeting with parents and identifying barriers
- Signposting to external services such as housing, foodbank, health, social care,
- pick ups and drop offs,
- engagement with parent and family to work together on a plan,
- pupil premium support for uniform, trip and extra curricular support,
- support for teachers to develop strong and more targeted relationships with child and family,
- support from SEND team
- school refusal help plan.
- Catch up clubs
- Pupil premium provision map

Throughout this year, we endeavour to get further support for our families by; voucher support from supermarkets, more designated pick up and drop offs, home visits after 3-5 days of consecutive absence, walking bus, invite only breakfast clubs.

13. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Attendance administrator will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the Attendance administrator will work with the Deputy Headteacher for attendance and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the Deputy Headteacher will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

14. Persistent Absent

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

15. Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect, the deputy Headteacher will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.

- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the Headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

16. Monitoring and analysing absence

The Attendance administrator will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The Deputy Headteacher for attendance will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a weekly, half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Attendance administrator will provide weekly class attendance data to the teachers to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The Attendance administrator and deputy Headteacher for attendance will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

17. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- Attendance is everyone's business
- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

We empower staff to take responsibility for attendance by:

- offering relevant training to help staff to promote good attendance.
- sharing relevant data so that they know which groups are most at risk of poor attendance;
- encouraging class teachers to talk to their pupils about attendance.
- Promoting strong relationships between pupils and teachers to overcome anxiety about returning to school after absence.

Understanding the importance of parental engagement and relationships between teachers and parents

18. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is to be in line with national averages which is currently 93%

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is November 2024.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Appendix A:

Attendance Intervention escalation plan

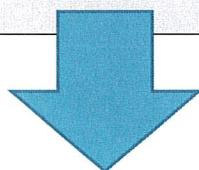
Notes for staff:

- Staff responsible for monitoring behaviour can use their discretion to escalate to the next tier before triggers are met if there are sudden changes in circumstances or patterns of attendance. However, the reasons for this must be recorded clearly on the agreed school systems and, where relevant, the pupil's personal attendance plan. An editable [Individual Attendance Plan](#) is provided to support this.
- Where there are significant concerns, staff responsible for monitoring behaviour do not need to work progressively through each stage - they can use their discretion to escalate to whichever stage is the best fit for the individual case. The reasons for this decision should be recorded.
- If stages are missed, staff should ensure that the relevant attendance warning letters are still issued at appropriate times.
- When a pupil is moved to a higher tier, the following staff should be informed: Deputy Headteacher, Chloe O'Connor
- When a pupil is moved up or down a tier, the date of this should be recorded on the agreed school systems.
- When outside agencies are involved, this should be recorded on the agreed school system along with the date of the referral, the current date and details/outcomes of any meetings or discussions that take place.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, these should always be recorded in detail on the school's agreed system and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be made aware.

Sample attendance letters for parents and carers can be found here: [Attendance: Sample Letters to Parents/Carers](#)

Stage One: Universal Support

Thresholds/triggers	Strategies to be used (Please note that these strategies will continue to be in place for all pupils, irrespective of where they are on the escalation plan.)	Monitoring procedures
• 93% - 100% attendance	Communicating expectations: • Regular reminders of the importance of good attendance, through the school newsletter, website, etc. • Weekly attendance awards • Termly attendance award Direct contact with parents/carers: • First day of absence text and/or phonecall • Requests for term-time holidays to be declined, unless there are exceptional circumstances	• Attendance tracked through the school's management information system (MIS) • Attendance admin to monitor individual, group and whole-school attendance to identify any concerns • Class teachers to be on alert for any absence patterns



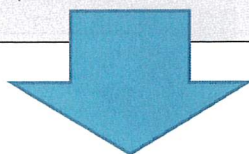
Stage Two: Initial Target Support

Thresholds/triggers	Actions to be taken	Monitoring procedures
Initiate support at this level if any of the following criteria are met: 93% attendance - Three or more late arrivals over a half-term period - An unexplained or unauthorised absence	Communicating expectations: - Pupils will continue to receive the universal support offered to all pupils at Stage One Direct contact with parents/carers: - An appropriate member of staff will have an informal discussion with the pupil to explore whether they have any concerns or issues that could be a barrier to attendance - Reminder letter sent home and parents/carers invited to discuss any concerns if they wish to do so - First warning letter issued Support: - Consider the external agencies that can address the individual needs of the pupil/family and make referrals as required. Possibilities include: MHST	- Attendance tracked through MIS - Deputy Headteacher to do weekly checks on the pupil's data - Class teachers to monitor pupil more closely



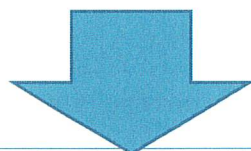
Stage Three: Enhanced Targeted Support

Thresholds/triggers	Actions to be taken	Monitoring procedures
Initiate support at this level if any of the following criteria are met: 90% - 92% attendance - Five or more late arrivals over a half term period - Subsequent unexplained or unauthorised absences	Communicating expectations: - Pupils will continue to receive the universal support offered to all pupils at Stage One and beyond Direct contact with parents/carers: - Second warning letter issued - Parents requested to attend a meeting in school to discuss attendance Support: - Consider attendance plan - support will be offered in line with this plan. An individual attendance audit may be used to determine specific areas of support. - Consider whether any additional partners could be engaged - make referrals as needed	- Attendance tracked through MIS - Deputy Headteacher to do weekly checks on the pupil's data - Class teachers to monitor pupil more closely



Stage Four: Intensive Support for Persistent Absentees

Thresholds/triggers	Actions to be taken	Monitoring procedures
Initiate support at this level if any of the following criteria are met: - Attendance below 89% - Continued late arrivals despite support offered at previous tiers - Continued unexplained or unauthorised absences despite support offered at previous tiers	Communicating expectations: - Pupils will continue to receive the universal support offered to all pupils at Stage One and beyond Direct contact with parents/carers: - Third warning letter issued Support: - Individual attendance plan reviewed - During the attendance plan review, those involved will identify whether any additional support could be offered by the school or partner agencies	- Attendance tracked through MIS - Attendance administrator or DDSL do daily checks on the pupil's data - Class teachers to offer more direct support as needed



Stage Five: Use of Parental Responsibility Measures

Thresholds/triggers	Actions to be taken	Monitoring procedures
Initiate support at this level if any of the following criteria are met: - Strategies introduced at stage four have failed to improve attendance - Any of the thresholds for legal action have been met	Communicating expectations: - Pupils will continue to receive the universal support offered to all pupils at Stage One and beyond Support: - Support initiated at previous stages will continue as appropriate Enforcement: - The local authority will be notified of the school's concerns - A parenting contract will be put into place which includes: - a statement by parents/carers that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are set out in the contract; - a statement by the school agreeing to provide support to the parents for the purpose of complying with the contract. - Local authority to utilise appropriate legal powers to enforce attendance	- Attendance tracked through MIS - DDSLs/ DSL to do daily checks on the pupil's data - Class teachers/form tutor to maintain regular individual support as required - School to liaise with the local authority regularly to support any measures that are being taken

Appendix B: Whole school attendance strategy

Leadership and Management

Our vision for attendance is:

The school will relentlessly work towards overcoming barriers to attendance alongside parents to improve overall attendance and reduce persistent absence.

Our targets for attendance are:

To improve pupil punctuality and attendance by having clear policies and procedures that engage all stakeholders in the journey to improve attendance

- Improve overall attendance percentage in line with local and national averages.
- Reduce persistent absence down from 30.1%
- Reduce the numbers of children regularly arriving late.

We will communicate our vision and targets to staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders by:

- newsletters
- the school website;
- open days and school events;
- social media accounts;
- assemblies
- School council meetings
- Parent forum

We recognise that absence from school can pose a safeguarding risk for our pupils. We will make sure that our staff, pupils and families understand these risks by:

- information leaflets;
- workshops to raise awareness;
- targeted support;
- briefings by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or other appropriate staff members;
- Supporting letters to parents
- Opportunities to meet with Attendance and welfare administrator and or DDSL
- CPD for staff

We expect good attendance and punctuality from our pupils. We use the following strategies to ensure that pupils understand this expectation:

- rewards and incentives for good attendance;
- reminders and updates in assemblies
- pastoral support for pupils with poor attendance;
- Informal support for parents/carers from Attendance and welfare administrator and DDSLs
- personal attendance plans

Absence from school affects pupils' attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes. We communicate this to our school community via:

- newsletters
- the school website;
- open days and school events;
- social media accounts;
- assemblies
- letters to parents or carers
- personal attendance plans
- parental forums

We empower staff to take responsibility for attendance by:

- offering relevant training to help staff to promote good attendance.
- sharing relevant data so that they know which groups are most at risk of poor attendance;
- encouraging class teachers to talk to their pupils about attendance.
- Promoting strong relationships between pupils and teachers to overcome anxiety about returning to school after absence.
- Understanding the importance of parental engagement and relationships between teachers and parents

We recognise that attendance is an important area of school improvement. We demonstrate our commitment to this by making sure it is resourced appropriately, to create, build and maintain systems to promote good attendance. We do this by:

- Regular meetings monitoring absence with attendance administrator and Deputy Headteacher
- 5 stage graduated response to attendance
- Stage 4/5 criteria examined for next steps
- Stage 3 or 4 attendance plans
- Stage 5 potential referral for legal framework to be followed.
- Meeting with parents and identifying barriers
- To overcome barriers, we offer; Signposting to external services such as housing, foodbank, health, social care, pick ups and drop offs, engagement with parent and family to work together on a plan, pupil premium support for uniform, trip and extra curricular support, support for teachers to develop strong and more targeted relationships with child and family, support from SEND team and our school refusal help plan.
- Throughout this year, we endeavour to get further support for our families by; voucher support from supermarkets, more designated pick up and drop offs, home visits after 3-5 days of consecutive absence, walking bus, invite only breakfast clubs

Our designated attendance champion on the senior leadership team is:

Chloe O'Connor, Deputy Headteacher

Their responsibilities include:

- developing and monitoring the school's attendance policy;
- monitoring attendance;
- supporting and/or manage other staff with specific responsibilities for attendance;
- devise, implement and monitor any interventions or escalation procedures;
- support any relevant sections of the school improvement plan.

We ensure that our staff are trained to use our attendance systems effectively and promote good attendance in school. Examples of the training offered to our staff include:

- Staff INSET in September
- Staff Handbook

-
- Promoting attendance as everyone's business
 - We believe attendance is part of a bigger picture, we take a trauma informed approach at Priory and believe strong relationships are essential. Staff have training on this regularly.
-

We ensure that our governors have an accurate view of attendance at our school so that they can offer effective support and challenge. We keep governors informed by:

- Deputy Headteacher's reports;
 - termly attendance updates in meetings;
 - governor scrutiny of attendance data;
 - link governor visits.
-

Relationships and Communication

As a school, we understand that developing a welcoming and positive culture is important in building trust and engagement and therefore promoting good attendance. We do this by:

- offering a wide range of extracurricular activities so that pupils can build better relationships with staff;
 - ensuring that strong pastoral systems are in place so that pupils and families are supported when needed;
 - organising a range of social events such as parent forums, SEND coffee mornings, priory friends coffee mornings for parents to build a sense of community;
 - ensuring that staff pass on positive news, rather than only contacting them when there is a problem.
-

We strive to communicate effectively with staff, pupils and families so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. Our strategies for doing this include:

- written communications, such as letters home and information leaflets;
 - online communications, such as the school website and emails
 - telephone contact, including welfare calls and texts to parents;
 - face-to-face interactions, such as parents' evenings, informal meetings and parenting workshops.
 - Newsletter for parents
 - Staff bulletin
-

We understand that some families will face barriers with communication. We take the following measures to ensure that our communication with parents is inclusive:

- using a wide range of methods to inform parents (not written communications alone);
 - using interpreters;
 - translating information sheets into languages that are commonly spoken by families;
 - offering the option of attending meetings virtually (for example, to support those with work commitments or mobility issues).
-

When required, we work with partners to promote good attendance. Examples include:

- local charities
 - social workers
 - local authority services
 - MHST
 - behaviour support providers
 - SENDIAS
-

We strive to model respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture.

All staff members should:

- treat pupils with dignity, build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries;
- take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively;
- understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity;
- communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and wellbeing.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- treat staff with respect;
- actively support the work of the school;
- ask staff for support when this is needed;
- let us know as soon as possible when there are issues which may affect absence.

We communicate this expectation by:

- using home-school agreements;
- having a dedicated attendance phone number/email address;
- making it easy to contact school when there is an issue;
- providing a designated contact for families that need extra support.

Systems and Data

We use clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve, reward and incentivise attendance and to address absences. Our systems include:

- 5 stage graduated response to attendance
- Stage 1-3 are around soft touch communication and teachers working with families, stage 3, 4 and 5 are attendance plans to identify and overcome barriers.
- Create enrichment clubs to encourage children to come to school
- Strategically place fun and enrichment opportunities to encourage improved attendance
- Celebrate class attendance and individual good attendance through weekly assemblies

We ensure that these systems are inclusive and appropriate for all pupils by:

- Every attendance plan and absence request is dealt by on a case by case basis
- Consideration individual SEND needs that may come with wider family challenges
- Consider that many of our families have relatives abroad whilst we do not encourage time off school we do consider that children need to see their grandparents or wider family
- We remain professionally curious with our approach to attendance and ensure we have the full picture before making attendance decisions.

We use robust school systems to provide useful data at cohort, group and individual levels to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups. These groups include:

- children who have a social worker, including looked-after children;
- young carers;
- children who are eligible for free school meals;

-
- children who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL);
 - children who have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).
-

We analyse attendance data regularly to identify issues and facilitate early intervention. This includes raising concerns with partner agencies that work with families.

Every member of staff in our school has a role in promoting good attendance. We help staff to know and understand this responsibility by:

- Attendance is everyone's responsibility
 - Establishing the role of attendance and welfare administrator who can provide support and guidance to staff
 - The attendance and welfare can also offer signposting information to staff
 - making specific reference to attendance in staff roles and responsibilities descriptions;
 - talking about attendance during line management meetings;
 - discussing attendance issues during staff meetings.
-

Attendance leaders provide the following information to staff to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement appropriate support:

- Staff are able to track attendance attainment and progress data through SIMS or our online data tracking system.
-

Our school attendance, safeguarding and pastoral support policies clearly outline:

- the key principles;
 - rules pupils need to follow;
 - routines;
 - consequence and support systems.
-

The escalation procedures to address absence are:

- understood by pupils, parents and carers;
- implemented consistently;
- reviewed regularly.

We ensure this by:

- providing information about escalation procedures and attendance interventions on the school website, information leaflets, open evenings and via any other relevant means;
 - explaining the systems in place during targeted attendance meetings with families;
 - monitoring the use and effectiveness of interventions to ensure that these are implemented consistently;
 - providing training and support for staff who are directly responsible for improving attendance;
 - gathering data on the escalation procedures to address absence;
 - using this data to analyse whether the current systems are working and to identify areas for further development;
 - ensuring that a member of the senior leadership team has responsibility for reviewing escalation procedures regularly.
-

We make sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by pupils and families, implemented consistently and that their impact is reviewed regularly. We do this by:

Impact is reviewed during meetings with Safeguarding link governor, at all Full Governing body meetings, and regularly in SLT meetings. Our impact is that we have maintained attendance at 91%, we have reduced persistent absence to under 30%. Our attendance is just below national average, however our context and characteristics is not in line with national averages.

Intervention

We will use the following data to identify where attendance interventions need to be targeted:

- register inspections;
- analysis of data from school registers (including analysis of absence codes);
- analysis of punctuality data;
- analysis of trends in attendance (on an individual, group and whole-school level);
- analysis of information recorded on the school safeguarding systems;
- records of home visits and their outcomes;
- records of interventions offered to individuals and groups and their outcomes (Pupil premium provision map);
- information provided by pastoral and other staff.

We will monitor and analyse this data regularly to ensure that interventions are delivered quickly to address absence.

We use specialist staff to support pupils and their families to identify and overcome barriers to attendance. Specific roles and responsibilities include:

- Attendance and welfare administrator
- DDSL's
- Learning mentors
- SENCo's
- Deputy Headteacher for Inclusion

We will create action plans in partnership with families and also include agencies that may be supporting families.

- Attendance plans
- TAF or TAC meetings
- Early Help, CiN or CP plans

We will implement a range of strategies to support pupils and families who require this. Examples include:

- Meeting with parents and identifying barriers
- Signposting to external services such as housing, foodbank, health, social care,
- pick ups and drop offs,
- engagement with parent and family to work together on a plan,
- pupil premium support for uniform, trip and extra curricular support,
- support for teachers to develop strong and more targeted relationships with child and family,
- support from SEND team
- school refusal help plan.
- Catch up clubs
- Pupil premium provision map

Throughout this year, we endeavour to get further support for our families by; voucher support from supermarkets, more designated pick up and drop offs, home visits after 3-5 days of consecutive absence, walking bus, invite only breakfast clubs

We will monitor the impact of any interventions, making adjustments if necessary, and use the findings to inform future strategy.

The following people are responsible for monitoring our attendance interventions:

Chloe O'Connor, Deputy Headteacher for Inclusion
Clarissa Chaulk, Attendance and welfare administrator
Emma Hill and Carol Barber, DDSL
Karen Larkins and Michelle Jefferies, Learning mentors

They will do this by following our graduated response to attendance.

Where interventions fail to address attendance issues, we will identify the reasons why and, where appropriate, change or adjust the intervention. We will engage the local authority and uses the powers they have for fixed penalty notice and fines where appropriate.

We will follow local authority codes of conduct, policies and procedures and make referrals for statutory intervention when school-based interventions have not resulted in improved attendance and relevant triggers/thresholds are met. The person responsible for this is:

Samantha De Costa

This strategy will be reviewed annually.

By: Chloe O'Connor, Deputy Headteacher for Inclusion

Date of last review: November 2023
