



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Statement of Intent

Priory Infant School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Priory Infant School.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 9:00am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

This policy is available to all parents on the school website and copies can be requested from the school office.

The Role of the School Staff

Mrs Viv Botting, has overall responsibility for attendance in her job share Headteacher role. Mrs Marie Regan, (FLO) and Mrs Sharon Warner (Admin Assistant) work together as attendance officers for the school.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies Marie Regan of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of Marie Regan and Sharon Warner (Attendance Officers) to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence

- Where there has been no response from parents after 2 days letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents informed of whole school attendance figure / progress towards target in PINs 3 x year and their own child's attendance figure in the end of year school report.

Timeline of School Action for Low Attendance

- 97% -100% attendance - class teacher and Marie Regan (FLO) monitor absences and reasons for them, Marie speaks to parents informally to advise if needed.
- 90% - 96% attendance - monitored through termly attendance meetings between Headteacher and Attendance Officers. Headteacher or FLO speaks to parents to request better attendance, followed up by a letter from Headteacher if needed.
- Below 90% - Parents invited to attendance meeting with Headteacher and FLO. Targets given for improvement. Set up Attendance Agreement or Early Help Referral.
- Below 85% - If Attendance Agreement not working parent will be requested to comply with Early Help Referral (if not already in place) and referral made to Local Authority Schools Liaison Officer.

Attendance Officer holds updated guidance on what work should be undertaken by the school prior to referral.

Children Missing Education

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Attendance & Inclusion Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

Lateness

At Priory Infant School the register is taken at 9:00am and 1:15pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9:30 am and 1:45pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent or patterns of lateness (eg. more than 10 lates in any term, or a specific day of the week when child is always late) noted at the end of term attendance meeting will be referred to the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) initially, and may result in a meeting with Headteacher and formal letter requesting improvement.

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence for approved reasons. Where there is doubt, the Headteacher, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be requested for an exceptional circumstance. All parents who make a request for absence receive a response slip. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and parents will be notified if the absence is authorised or not.

Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school.

The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that **will not** be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. “poorly/unwell” given as reason once attendance rate drops below 90% and after parent has been asked to provide proof eg. doctor’s certificate or medication
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child’s/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Holiday requests
- Family get-together/day out

Attendance and Lateness

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held. The school has a ‘five-step’ approach to monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and consider each case carefully.

‘Five Steps’

1. Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all pupils and FLO visits as appropriate.
2. Invitation to meet with school staff (informal)
3. Formal request to meet with school staff for Attendance Agreement to be put into place
4. Discussion with LA School Liaison Officer to identify pupils with attendance below 90%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness, allocation of FLO support.
5. Initiate an Early Help Referral / or Referral to Attendance & Inclusion Team

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral to the Attendance & Inclusion Team is made details of child’s attendance printed from the school’s computerized registration system, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings MUST be attached to the completed AS1 referral (Local Authority form) with any other relevant information.

How we monitor and support pupils with poor attendance

If there are problems that affect a pupil’s attendance we will identify, investigate, and work in partnership with parents and other agencies to resolve problems as quickly as possible. We will adopt a focused intervention aimed at returning the pupil to full-time attendance. The school’s rigorous policy and practice for monitoring attendance means that often the school can be proactive when working with parents rather than reactive. Practice includes:

- Accurate and efficient computerised registration of pupils, in the morning and the afternoon.
- First day calling for absent pupils
- W13 (LEA form requesting reason for absence) sent if no reason for absence given after 3 days
- Designated Attendance Officers – Admin assistant and FLO
- Termly attendance meetings between FLO / Admin Assistant / Headteacher to monitor and review absences and lates (more frequent if needed for specific cases)
- Contact with parent informally from FLO to offer support and remind of school policy
- Leave of Absence request form clearly states school policy and expectations for good attendance
- Headteacher actively follows up any Leave of Absence request forms with parents

- Option of Breakfast Club places for children whose parents have difficulties with attendance or lateness
- Meetings with Headteacher to discuss persistent absences or lates – a summary of this meeting will be recorded in writing
- Referral to Attendance Officer
- Multi agency meetings – where appropriate – e.g. involving school nurse to support a child who is frequently unwell

The *Leave Of Absence Application form* (see Appendix 1 attached) will be used for all absence requests other than illness so that the Headteacher on behalf of the Governing Body can make an equitable judgement in each case based on the individual's circumstances.

Local Authority Action

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there is at least 10 sessions (5 days) absence in a term the school will consider the following:

School's Liaison Officer Actions

This may include:

- home visits
- multi agency meetings
- sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.

Penalty Notices

The Governors of Priory Infant School agreed that Penalty Notices will not be used in September 2017 after a full review of this policy. All Governors had copies of the Kent Guidelines (Jan 2016). Information from other local schools was sought about whether they used penalty notices and what the impact had been. A meeting with School's Liaison Officer to discuss use of penalty notices was held in March 2017, with a Governor in attendance.

This decision is reviewed annually with the policy.

Leave of Absence/Holiday

Time off school for family holidays is not a right. Following DFE Guidance the school will not authorise any absence for holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher, in consultation with Governors will make a decision on a case by case basis of what may constitute an "exceptional circumstance". Factors that may be considered include but are not limited to: the nature of the reason leave is sought, the frequency of the request, whether the school received advanced notice, the child's attainment, previous attendance record and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

Policy dated: September 2017



Appendix 1

PRIORY INFANT SCHOOL

Application for Leave of Absence during term time

Absences do affect children’s learning and at Priory Infant School all staff and Governors are committed to giving children the best possible access to 190 days of education per year. We hope and expect that parents will support us in this by setting good examples to their children about the importance of good attendance. (We know that holidays are cheaper in term time – however this alone is not a good enough reason for your child to miss any schooling.)

There is a legal requirement for parents (or carers with parental responsibility) to ensure their children attend school for 190 days per academic year. Any leave of absence (not related to sickness) must be approved by the Headteacher of the school on behalf of the Governors.

If an absence is not approved and you still decide to take your child out of school **I must inform you** that if the school is contacted by Education Welfare/Kent Police Truancy Team the school will confirm that the absence is unauthorised and this may result in them visiting you.

Please complete the form below with as much information as possible to help us make a decision. We may wish to speak to you about this before we make a decision.

I wish my child Class

to be absent from school from to

Reason for absence

.....

.....

.....

Signature of parent / carer Date:

Name of child Class.....

Absence from school from to

The absence will be: authorised unauthorised

Signed on behalf of the school Governors

..... Date:

Office use only:

Child's name _____

Total number of days requested:

Attendance rate :%

Previous number of days absent this academic year

Number of authorised absences - sessions

Number of unauthorised absences – sessions

Governors' decision

Authorised

Not authorised

Parents seen by Headteacher?

Reasons for decision

.....
.....
.....

Signed **date**

Headteacher