



Princecroft

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Incorporating The Hive Nursery

Attendance Policy

Issue date	
Review date	December 2021
Date of next policy review	December 2023

This policy is in line with the Single Equality Policy

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy should be read and understood with reference to the following documents:

School policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- School's Accessibility Plan
- Single Equality Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

National guidance:

[School attendance – Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities \(August 2020\)](#)

[School attendance parental responsibility measures \(Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police – January 2105\)](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE September 2021\)](#)

[Children missing from Education \(DfE September 2016\)](#)

Local guidance:

- Local Authority Attendance Policy (August 2020) including Appendix E – Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (Appendix 1)
- Penalty notice for unauthorised leave of absence during term time – Information to Parents and Carers (September 2017) (Appendix 2)
- Leave of Absence Request Form (Appendix 3)
- Form CME1 – referral re 'Child Missing from Education' (Appendix 4)
- Protocol for schools when a child has not been collected as expected by parents at the end of the school day (Appendix 5)

All appendices available from the School Office

Legal framework

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration Act) (England) Regulations 2006 (and all subsequent amendments)

Policy Statement:

- Education prepares children for life, is precious and is a right to which every child is entitled.
- Regular attendance is an essential foundation for raising pupil attainment. Absence from school can seriously disrupt pupils' continuity of learning. Not only

do they miss out on taught lessons, but many children find it difficult to catch up when they return to school.

- The school is committed to equality of opportunity for all its pupils and will work alongside pupils and parents to enable all children to maximise their attendance and their access to the curriculum.
- Without regular attendance, a child cannot be expected to realise their potential, nor will they be able to participate confidently alongside their peers.
- The Governing Body of the school expects all staff to place high priority on punctuality and attendance by pupils in partnership with parents.

Aims of this policy

- To ensure that children and young people make the best use of their educational opportunities by attending school regularly, punctually and in a state of readiness for learning.
- To set out the legal framework and to explain the roles and responsibilities of the Local Authority (LA) and the Education Welfare Service (EWS)
- To ensure that everyone within the school community understands their responsibilities in promoting excellent attendance and punctuality.
- To outline procedures for parents when absence is unavoidable.
- To outline procedures for parents when requesting an 'authorised absence'.
- To outline procedures for the school when absence is not explained.
- To outline procedures for the school when a child's attendance / lateness is a cause for concern.

The Legal Framework

- This policy is written in the light of guidance from the DfE 'School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' (August 2020) which in turn is informed by national legislation and therefore reflects the school's statutory duties.
- *The school will ensure it complies with any additional guidance issued by the DfE as a result of extraordinary circumstances (e.g. COVID 19). (This requirement has been satisfied by the inclusion of an addendum to the policy which can be found at the bottom of this document.)*
- It also reflects the guidance contained in the Wiltshire LA Attendance Policy (Revised August 2020)
- The school recognises the responsibilities of the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) and supports them in the discharging of the statutory duty of the Local Authority in respect of non-attendance at school.
- Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents¹ must ensure their children are educated. For most parents this means registering their child at a school and ensuring their regular attendance. Failure to do so can result in the issue of a 'Penalty Notice' or being prosecuted.
- *The school understands its responsibilities regarding the contents of the 'Admission Register'.*

¹ **Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents

- *By law schools are required:*
 - *to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon*
 - *to report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for ten school days or more without known reason*
 - *to notify the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from their admission register, including when a parent notifies the school of their intention to home educate their child.*
- *By law the attendance register must show for every session, whether a pupil is present, absent, attending approved educational activity or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.*
- *Authorised absence is where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for the absence.*
- *At Princecroft School, pupils are required to be at school by 8.40am. Registration will be taken by 9.00 am after which pupils will be registered as late.*

Working in partnership - Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities of the School

- **The Head Teacher, Mr Michael Park**, is responsible for ensuring that this policy is effectively implemented and communicated to parents and for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- The school will ensure that all parents are made aware of this policy by alerting all parents to its availability on the school website and in the School Office
- **The Senior Management Team** is responsible for developing coherent whole school systems for improving attendance including supportive interventions involving other agencies if necessary. The member of staff with particular responsibility for monitoring attendance is the **Admin Assistant, Mrs Binns** in the School Office
- The administrative assistant responsible for attendance and absence will ensure that data is monitored and circulated regularly and liaises with the Head Teacher, the Deputy Head Teacher and the EWS on any attendance issues causing concern. Agreed procedures will be implemented by the team for pupils whose attendance falls below 90% Teachers are responsible for ensuring that an accurate register is taken at the designated time. All teachers challenge lateness and set high standards of punctuality themselves.
- Where any follow up action is taken by teachers and/or members of the school's management team, accurate records must be kept and copies placed on individual pupil records.

Responsibilities of the Governing Body

- The Head Teacher will ensure that the school's attendance figures are reported to the Governing Body who will monitor progress against annual attend targets and will in turn report figures to the Full Governing Body at every Full Governing Body meeting

Responsibilities of parents:

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents who have chosen to have their child educated at school have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance.

This means:

- to work in partnership with the school to take an active interest in their child's school career, to reinforce school policies/arrangements on homework, behaviour and approach to learning, to attend parents' evening and other meetings where necessary
- where practicable, for parents to provide the school with more than one emergency contact number (for two different adults) for their child/children and for the parent with whom the child/children reside for the majority of the time to be responsible for ensuring those numbers are kept up to date.
- ensuring that their child arrives at school on time (not before **8.40am** and not after **8.55am**) and that they are collected on time.
- ensuring that their child arrives appropriately dressed and in a 'condition to learn' (i.e. not too tired or too hungry)
- *to avoid arranging medical or dental appointments during school hours*
- *where there are problems with attendance and punctuality, parents are expected to work in partnership with the school, and any other agencies (as appropriate) to help to resolve the problems relating to non-attendance and*
- to acknowledge receipt of the school's Attendance Policy on Registration when a child first starts at the school.

Procedures:

Procedures for reporting late arrival or absences:

- When parents are aware that their child is going to be late for school, they should notify the school as early as is reasonably possible.
- Parents should ensure that they sign their child in or out if they arrive at school outside normal hours or are taken out of school before the normal end of the day, giving the reason for lateness or early withdrawal from school. This signing in/out book is kept in the School Office
- *Parents are asked to ensure that their child is fully aware of the procedures they must follow in the event that they are late for school.*
- In the event of illness or any other reason for absence, parents will telephone the school office before 9.00am on the first day of the absence.
- Parents should provide an explanation for the absence, which should then be confirmed in writing when the child returns to school.
- If the absence is to continue for more than one day, parents should telephone the school on subsequent days, again before 9.00am, unless they are able to give an exact length of time on the first day of absence. There is a dedicated messaging service to report absences that can be accessed 24 hours a day. It is also possible to report an absence by email to **Mrs Binns (mbinns@princecroft.wilts.sch.uk)**
- Parents need to inform the school if a child's absence is due to some traumatic event which the school needs to deal with sensitively so that the school can respond appropriately to the emotional needs of the child on their return to school.
- Where the school has not been notified of a child's absence, parents will be telephoned to confirm that a child is absent and the reasons for that absence. If it is not possible to speak directly with parents we will then make contact with the nominated emergency contacts to establish the reasons for absence

- Where the school has not been notified and it is not possible to contact parents or their nominated emergency contact to establish the reason for absence, the school is obliged to mark the child's absence as 'unauthorised'.
- If, after 3 days of absence your child has not been seen and no contact has been made with the school, a home visit will be made by school staff to ascertain the safety and well-being of your child and the reason for their absence.
- After 10 days of unexplained absence, where your child has not been seen and no contact has been made with the school, we are obliged to notify the Local Authority, who will then follow their procedures for 'Children missing from education'. Parents should then expect contact and/or visits from the EWS to ascertain the safety and well-being of their child.

Collecting your child from school:

- We ask that all parents ensure that they are able to collect their children from school on time.
- If parents are unable to collect their child as usual then they will need to communicate the alternative arrangements that they have made with the school as early as possible.
- We will not release children in circumstances where we have not been advised of alternative arrangements.
- If children remain uncollected from the school, the school is aware of the **Wiltshire Protocol** to be followed. The school has ensured that all parents have been informed of the existence of the protocol which has been published on the school website, with a hard copy available from the school office.

Procedures for requesting 'authorised absence' from school

- *Parents must seek permission from the Head Teacher (or authorised representative) by submitting a written application in advance of any request for leave of absence. This could be for the purpose of a family holiday or family occasion, such as a wedding or funeral or for any other reason. Each request will be considered individually and should meet the circumstances of being 'exceptional'.*
- Inevitably there will be occasions when absence is unavoidable or justifiable, these will include:
 - illness
 - bereavement
 - medical/dental appointments
 - days of religious observance
 - visits to other schools (secondary transfer, entrance exams)
 - education at another establishment (e.g. referral unit)
 - approved sporting activity / performance
 - annual family holiday in exceptional circumstances
- Where an absence is unavoidable or unplanned, then parents are asked to follow the procedures for reporting absences as outlined above, unless the event has been organized by the school..
- Where an absence is for anything else apart from an annual holiday (in exceptional circumstances), the school needs to be informed in writing.
- Where a request for absence in term time needs to be made, parents need to complete an 'Absence from School' form (Appendix 3), which is available from

the school office. Forms need to be handed into the school office **at least 5 working days in advance** so that they can be processed.

- We do not give retrospective agreements for leave of absence, so any absence not advised to the school in advance will be unauthorised.
- Requests will be considered by the Head Teacher and parents will be advised if their request has been authorised.
- *Any pupil who has taken an authorised term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence if they are ill in the period directly before or after the dates advised to school.*
- *Parents/carers will be asked to provide evidence if a pupil does not return to school on the agreed date following a holiday as a result of delayed or cancelled flights or other travel arrangements.*
- *Where an unauthorised leave of absence is taken, parents may be issued with a penalty notice. This will be the sum of £120 per parent for each child but is reduced to £60 per parent for each child if paid within 21 days from the date of issue.*

Concerns over attendance, punctuality and 'unauthorised absences'

- Weekly monitoring of registers is carried out to identify pupils with low attendance and/or patterns of absences that may lead to 'Persistent Absence' (PA), which could be one or a combination of many forms of absence such as: regular absence on a particular day of the week, broken weeks, persistent lateness, or too many authorised or unauthorised absences.
- A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more of schooling across the school year. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and early identification is crucial.
- Initial concerns will either be communicated in person, by phone or by letter (if in person or by phone this should be followed up by a letter), requesting that parents attend a meeting to discuss the situation to explore ways in which the school can support parents to resolve the problem. At that meeting the parents and member of staff will agree an action plan to be put in place for the pupil. The member of staff will also explain the actions that might be taken should the problem persist.
- In such cases, the school will work with parents to improve their child's attendance levels and ask for their full engagement and support in that process. We will make every effort to work constructively and sympathetically with parents to respond to their individual circumstances and agree the procedures that will be implemented in order to tackle the problem.
- In the case of absence due to ill health, we may ask for medical evidence in order to justify any future absences.
- Where appropriate, the school may request that the parents enter into a 'parenting contract' which sets out what is expected of the parents, pupil and school.
- However, in the event that the pattern persists, the school may make a referral to the Local Authority requesting their intervention, which may include penalty notices and/or court action.

- The school is obliged to report any concerns regarding attendance (including persistent late arrival) and absence to the EWS.²

² When making referrals the school must use the referral form CME1 – Appendix 4

ADDENDUM TO ATTENDANCE POLICY IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

This addendum should be read in conjunction with the relevant school policies and the latest DfE Guidance:

School Policies

- Attendance Policy
- Remote Education and any current Addendums
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Single Equality Policy

Guidance from the Department for Education (DfE)

- [What parents need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19](#)
- [Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(DfE 01/09/20\)](#)

We would recommend that you read the document referenced above: [What parents need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19 a copy of which can also be obtained from the school office, along with any other relevant policies or documents.](#)

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- The Local Authority can issue a penalty notice in the following circumstances:
 - overt truancy
 - absence from school, either when a parent continually fails to provide an explanation or the school considers the absence to be avoidable.
 - holidays taken during term time where the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- Penalty Notices are also issued for absence taken during term time where the leave of absence has not been authorised by the school, or an absence has not been requested in advance and the pupil has had a minimum of 10 sessions (5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence during the previous six months in the academic year up to and including the day the Education Welfare Service is notified.
 - Penalty Notices can also be issued to the parent/carer of an excluded child in the event that their child is present in a public place during school hours on a day which is one of the first five school days of that exclusion or, where the exclusion is for a fixed period of five days or less, any of the days of that exclusion period. A more detailed explanation regarding self-isolation, please refer to the government's document entitled '[Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)'
 - If your child has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, and then develops symptoms but has a negative test result, they will still need to self-isolate for the full 10 days from the day after contact with the person who has tested positive.

Procedures for reporting absences:

- Where non-attendance is related to coronavirus (COVID-19) and falls within one of the categories as outlined above, parents must inform the school of the reasons for that absence and, as advised above, if they have received written notification that shielding is necessary, the school needs to be provided with a copy of that notification.

Remote education:

- If your child is unable to attend school or college for any of these reasons, we will provide support with remote education and pastoral support in line with our school's policy.