



Princecroft

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Incorporating The Hive Nursery

Attendance Policy

Review date	February 2024
Date of next policy review	February 2026

This policy is in line with the Single Equality Policy

1

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

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

School policies:

- Admissions
- Behaviour Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- School's Accessibility Plan
- Single Equality Policy
- Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Offer
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

National guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities \(DfE published 05/2022, applies from 09/2022\)](#)
- [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(DfE published 05/2022 & applies from 09/2022\)](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures: Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police \(DfE 01/2015 last updated 05/2020\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE 09/ 2022\)](#)
- [Children missing from Education \(DfE 09.2016\)](#)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school \(DfE pub 09/14, last updated 08/17\)](#)
- [Suspensions and permanent exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement \(DfE first pub 06/2012, last updated 09/22\)](#)

Local guidance:

- Wiltshire LA Attendance Policy: Recommendations for developing a school attendance framework and policy (Revised August 2020)
- [Wiltshire LA 'Attendance and behaviour - parents advice and support' including information on requesting leave of absence and penalty notices](#)
- [Wiltshire Council - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#)
- Leave of Absence Request Form (available on the school website or from the school office)
- Form CME1 – referral re 'Child Missing from Education'

- Wiltshire Protocol for Schools when a child has not been collected as expected by parents¹ at the end of the school day (available on the school website and from the school office)

Legal framework

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration Act) (England) Regulations 2006 (and all subsequent amendments)
- The Equality Act 2010

Policy Statement:

- Education prepares children for life, is precious and is a right to which every child is entitled.
- Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.
- 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.
- Without regular attendance, a child cannot be expected to realise their potential, nor will they be able to participate confidently alongside their peers.
- The school is committed to equality of opportunity for all its pupils and will work alongside pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place, thus enabling all children to maximise their attendance and their access to the curriculum.
- Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with the school's efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources.
- 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.

¹ 'Parent/s' means all natural parents, whether they are married or not, any person who has responsibility for a child or young person and any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

- 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.
- To outline the procedures when a child cannot be collected from school at the normal time.

The Legal Framework

- This policy is written in the light of guidance from the DfE ['Working together to improve school attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' \(09/2022\)](#) which in turn is informed by national legislation and therefore reflects the school's statutory duties.
- The school will also ensure that it complies with an additional guidance issued by the DfE as a result of exceptional circumstances and will update parents accordingly.
- The school recognises the responsibilities of the EWS and supports them in the discharging of the statutory duty of the LA in respect of non-attendance at school.
- Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents must ensure their children are educated. For most parents this means registering their child at a school and ensuring their regular attendance. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. Failure to do so can result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or being prosecuted.
- The school understands its responsibilities with regard to the contents of the 'Admission Register' and the 'Attendance Register' and that, by law, schools are required:
 - to keep an up to date 'Admissions Register' complete with details of every child admitted to the school, in line with their legal requirements and to inform the LA in the event of a pupil's name being deleted from the school for reasons outlined in current legislation;²
 - 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 a known reason.
- 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.
- An '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. All other absences are unauthorised.
- At Princecroft School, pupils are required to be at school at **8.30am**. Registration will be taken between **8.45 and 8.50am** after which pupils will be registered as late. The register closes at **9.15am**. Arrival after closure of the register will be marked as an unauthorised absence and **coded U** in line with Wiltshire County Council and Department for Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site but is legally recorded as an absence.

² As detailed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Working together to improve attendance:

- Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, and not against, families. All partners should work together to:
 - **Expect:** Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn, by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
 - **Monitor:** Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
 - **Listen and understand:** When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen, to understand barriers to attendance and to agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
 - **Facilitate support:** Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome any barriers outside of school. This might include early help or a whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
 - **Formalise support:** Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.
 - **Enforce:** Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Expectations of the school:

- All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. This is the responsibility of all members of our school community and we set high expectations for every pupil, which are clearly communicated to parents and pupils. This means that we:
 - develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance;
 - have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand;
 - accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have an effective day to day process in place to follow up absences;
 - regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place;
 - build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them;
 - share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Responsibilities:

- A useful summary of the specific responsibilities of parents, schools, governors and local authorities can be found in the DfE Guidance: Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE published 05/2022 & applies from 09/2022)
- This summary covers all pupils but in addition, makes particular reference to those with SEND, specific medical conditions and pupils who are supported by a social worker.
- The sections below outline the key responsibilities for parents, schools and the school's governing body, including, the information that the school requires and the procedures that need to be followed by parents both in reporting an absence and requesting an absence during term time. In addition, we explain the role we will take in monitoring your child's attendance.
- As a school and when necessary, we work collaboratively with local partners including other schools, the Local Authority, the local community (including voluntary and community groups) the health service and the police to ensure that we are doing all we can to support parents and pupils to tackle problems of poor attendance. In addition, there are certain legal requirements that we are required to share with the local authority regarding persistent absence and the removal of a pupil's name from the attendance register.

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 the school policies, arrangements on homework, behaviour and approach to learning, to attend parents' evenings 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 **8.25am** and not after **8.40am**) 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 wherever possible;
- 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;
- to acknowledge receipt of the school's Attendance policy on registration when a child first starts at the school.

Procedures for reporting late arrival or absence:

- 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.

- In the event of illness or any other reason for absence, parents should contact the school office before 9.00am on the first day of the 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 (admin@princecroft.wilts.sch.uk).
- 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 contact 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.
- 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 try and establish the reason for absence.
- Where the school has not been notified and it is not possible to contact parents, or their nominated emergency contacts, to establish the reason for absence, the school is obliged to mark the child's absence as 'unauthorised'.
- Parents should ensure that they sign their child in and/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. The signing in/out ipad is located just outside the school office.
- Parents are asked to ensure that their child (where age appropriate) is fully aware of the procedures they must follow in the event that they are late for school.

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 unless such advice has been received
- If children remain uncollected, 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 and is available in a hard copy 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.
- A leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances for example a family emergency, a funeral of a close family member or a wedding of a close family member.
- Inevitably there will be occasions when absence is unavoidable or justifiable, these will include:
 - illness

- medical/dental appointments (where it has not been possible to arrange one out of school hours)
- 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.
- In order to request an authorised approval for absence in term time for exceptional circumstances (as outlined above) parents need to complete an 'Absence from School' form, which is available from the school office or can be downloaded from the school's website. 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 a period directly before or after the dates advised to school.
- Parents 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.

Responsibilities of the School

- The Head Teacher, **Mrs Gemma Pierson**, 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 Leadership 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**.
- 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.
- Through our regular monitoring of attendance and absence data we will analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and their families. This will involve us looking not only at the attendance data (including their punctuality) for individual pupils, but also

cohorts and groups of pupils across the school to inform us and help us achieve our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

- We will use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers (as well as any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupils premium leads as required) in order for us to focus on those pupils and develop targeted actions to support their needs.
- We will monitor the effectiveness of any intervention and support so that we are able to improve upon the kind of support that we offer and the strategies that we have implemented.
- 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.

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

- Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, the school is mindful of the barriers these pupils face and endeavour to put additional support in place where necessary, to help them access their full-time education.
- It is important that parents of children with specific medical conditions or SEND contact the school to discuss any concerns they might have which could potentially have an impact on their child's attendance at school so that we can work in partnership with parents.
- Further details on the school's approach to levels of support that both the school and the local authority can offer can be found in the school's policies on "Supporting pupils with medical conditions who cannot attend school" and our "SEND offer", copies of which can be found on the school's website or requested in hard copy format from the school office.
- More detailed information can also be found in Section 2, page 17 of the [DfE guidance "Working together to improve school attendance"](#) and the [DfE Guidance "Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school"](#)

Concerns over attendance, punctuality and 'unauthorised absences'

- Through our weekly monitoring of registers, we will be able 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.
- The school is obliged to report any concerns regarding attendance (including persistent late arrival) and absence to the EWS.³
- Early identification is crucial and communication with parents will begin as soon as a problem is detected. Initial concerns will either be communicated in person,

³ When making referrals the school must use the referral form CME

by phone or by letter (if in person or by phone this should be followed up by a letter), explaining the actions that might be taken should the problem persist and seeing if the school can offer any support to the parents to resolve the problem.

- We will make every effort to work constructively and sympathetically with parents to respond to their individual circumstances.
- Where appropriate, the school may develop, along with parents, a “voluntary early help plan” or request that the parents enter into a more formal, but voluntary ‘parenting contract’ which sets out what is expected of the parents, the pupil and school. The school’s approach is outlined in the section above on “Working together to improve attendance” and more detailed information about parenting contracts can be found in the DfE guidance [School attendance parental responsibility measures: Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police \(DfE 01/2015 last updated 05/2020\)](#)
- 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 Notice can also be issued to the parent 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 exclusions or, where the exclusion is for a fixed period of five days or less, any of the days of that exclusion period.
- For further information, please click on this link: [Wiltshire Council - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#)
- Where a voluntary early help plan, or parenting contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be a useful alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. In deciding whether to progress to an ESO, the school and local authority should have exhausted voluntary support and be clear that making the order would be beneficial for the pupil and parents.
- Where parents persistently fail to comply with the terms of an ESO, they may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the LA in the Magistrates Court with the potential fine, if found guilty, of up to £1000. This however is seen as a last resort where all other voluntary and formal support of legal intervention has failed.
- The decision to prosecute rests solely with the LA as an independent prosecuting authority.

Responsibilities of the Governing Body

The Governing Body should:

- recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school’s ethos and policies;
- ensure school leaders fulfil expectation and statutory duties;

- regularly review, at Full Governors' Body meetings, the attendance figures reported by the Head Teacher and discuss (and challenge) trends to help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most;
- ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Policy Review

- This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier where there is an update to the DfE guidance.