

Pegswood Primary School



Attendance and Absence Policy September 2024

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Approved by Governors: 

Date: 27-9-24

Headteacher: 

Date: 27/9/24

Review Date: Sept 2027



Statement of intent

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

We have high expectations for every pupil's attendance at school and we communicate these expectations clearly, strongly and consistently to parents and pupils. The principle underpinning our systems and practices linked to attendance is: listen, understand, empathise and support - but do not tolerate.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the headteacher and governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in the Education Act, 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.
- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

Aims

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Create an ethos in which excellent attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents/carers of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Develop and implement procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Support families and pupils who are experiencing any difficulties which are affecting attendance and/or punctuality.



Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- 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.
- 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.

The Office is responsible for:

- Recording registration information using SIMs, which includes attendance and punctuality information.
- Recording reasons for absence for children who are Persistently Absent or consistently late.
- Taking and recording messages from parents/carers (or staff) regarding absence.
- Contacting parents/carers of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the headteacher.

Classroom-based staff are responsible for:

- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- 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.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.



- Ensuring information received from parents/carers regarding an absence are passed on to office staff by the time the registers are returned to the school office after morning registration.
- Discussing attendance issues at parent evenings where necessary.

School has a responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

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.
- The punctuality of their children.

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 is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent.

- 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. School may request appointment letters/cards
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:



An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. 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 absenteeism:

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

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and have an attendance of at least 96 percent throughout the year.

Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

School 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 an attendance review with information shared with relevant staff.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

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.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with parents/carers to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Meet with pupils, in an age-appropriate manner, to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.



- Lead regular check-ins across the year to review progress and the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone or message via Class Dojo as soon as possible (9am at the latest) on the first day of their child's absence. School should be told why the child is off and give an indication of when their child is likely to return.

A telephone call will be made to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence 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.

The school will inform the EWO, on a half-termly 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 complete a missing in education return and the school will contact the EWO.

Parental involvement

The school will build 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.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.



Attendance register

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 before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- 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.

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.

Lateness

The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.



The school day starts at 8:50am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time. Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The register is taken at 9.00 am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time, with the register closing at 9.20am.
- After lunch, registers are marked by 1:20pm.

Term-time leave

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, the headteacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time in most cases. The headteacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term-time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher. 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.

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines. The latest fines guidelines can be found on the DFE website.

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 within one week of the request.

Where permission has been granted, the office manager will include the pupil's name on the off-site register.

Our lunch time hours are between 11.45-12.45 for EYFS and Key Stage 1 and 12.15-13.15 Key Stage 2.

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 child off-site register which is kept in the main 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 has given their permission.

If a pupil expected to leave no longer has reason to do so, e.g. a medical appointment is cancelled, the parent/carer will inform a member of staff at the school office immediately.



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.

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 8:50am, where the teacher will record the attendance in a paper-based register, which is then input into SIMS. 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.

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 immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - The school kitchen

- The library classroom
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
 - If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
 - The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
 - 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.

Religious observances

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

Appointments

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, evidence of the appointment must be seen by a member of the school staff.

Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, understand that they may 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.

Rewarding good attendance

Across the school year, events will be planned that are classed a reward or privilege, School trips and events will be considered a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90%, these privileges may be taken away. The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96%.



Leave of absence (no request)

Parent(s)/carer(s) full name and address

Date

Dear (Parent(s)/carer(s) full name)

Re: Child's full name and date of birth

I write with regard to the above named child who was absent from school (**insert dates**). I have tried to contact you with regard to this period of absence and have been unsuccessful.

I am satisfied however that you have been on a family holiday - which is deemed to be an unauthorised leave of absence.

You should be aware that as from the 1st September 2013, Headteachers **shall not** grant a request for a leave of absence **unless** an application has been made in advance to the school, when such a request is made any leave can only be authorised if there are exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

In this case, no such request for a leave of absence has been made, so there were no exceptional circumstances to consider. As a result, the period of absence referred to above has been recorded as an unauthorised family holiday on the register.

You should be aware that failure to secure your child's regular attendance at school can amount to offence contrary to s444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. In accordance with current guidance, this period of absence is capable of triggering a referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Team for a Penalty Notice. Should a referral be made and the Local Authority decide to issue a Penalty Notice, then: you will be required to pay:

For a first offence, the Penalty Notice will be £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days rising to £160 if paid after the 21 days – it must be paid within 28 days.

For a second offence, the amount is £160 per parent per child to be paid within 28 days.

Please note that a third penalty notice **cannot** be issued to the same parent for the same child within three years of the date of issue of the first. Prosecution / other interventions will be considered (you should also be aware that a Penalty Notice can be issued individually to each parent in respect of a child) failure to pay may result in prosecution before your local Magistrates Court.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Leave of absence (no request)
BUT NO CONFIRMATION OF HOLIDAY

Parent(s)/carer(s) full name and address

Date

Dear (Parent(s)/carer(s) full name)

Re: Child's full name and date of birth

I write with regard to the above named child who was absent from school (**insert dates**). I have tried to contact you with regard to this period of absence and have been unsuccessful.

As a result, the period of absence referred to above has been recorded as an unauthorised absence on the register.

You should be aware that failure to secure your child's regular attendance at school can amount to offence contrary to s444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. In accordance with current guidance, this period of absence is capable of triggering a referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Team. Should a referral be made, then the Local Authority may decide to monitor your case, should attendance remain a concern then the Local Authority may decide to:

- Issue a Fixed Penalty Notice - you will be required to pay a Fixed Penalty of up to £120, (you should also be aware that a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued individually to each parent in respect of a child) failure to pay may result in prosecution before your local Magistrates Court.
- Issue a prosecution in the local Magistrates Court for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further or indeed provide an explanation for this period of absence, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



(Leave of absence - Not authorised)

Parents name and address

Date

Dear *(insert parent's name)*

(Child's name and DOB)

Thank you for your request of the *(insert date)* to take *(insert child's name)* out of school during term time between the..... and

You should be aware that as from the 1st September 2013, Headteachers **shall not** grant a request for a leave of absence unless an application has been made in advance to the school and, when such a request is made any leave can only be authorised if there are exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

After carefully considering your application I have decided not to authorise your request for *(insert name of the child)* to be taken out of school as I am not satisfied that there exceptional circumstances:-

(Insert full reasons why you are not satisfied exceptional circumstances have not been met)

(insert name of child) is therefore expected to be in school during these dates and any absence will be considered unauthorised absence, unless supported by medical evidence.

You should be aware that failure to secure your child's regular attendance at school can amount to offence contrary to s444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. In accordance with current guidance, this period of absence is capable of triggering a referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Team for a Penalty Notice. Should a referral be made and the Local Authority decide to issue a Penalty Notice, then: you will be required to pay:

For a first offence, the Penalty Notice will be £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days rising to £160 if paid after the 21 days – it must be paid within 28 days.

For a second offence, the amount is £160 per parent per child to be paid within 28 days.

Please note that a third penalty notice **cannot** be issued to the same parent for the same child within three years of the date of issue of the first. Prosecution / other interventions will be considered (you should also be aware that a Penalty Notice can be issued individually to each parent in respect of a child) failure to pay may result in prosecution before your local Magistrates Court.

I have attached a copy of *(insert child's name)* attendance for this academic year for your information.

I hope that this letter explains the reasons for the decision that has been made.

Yours sincerely