



ATTENDANCE POLICY

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| Staff Link: | Helen Cullen | Date: | Sept 2017 |
| Governor Link: | Graham Pritchard | Review: | Sept 2018 |

Glossary of Terms

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| LEA | Local Education Authority |
| LA | Local Authority |
| DFE | Department for Education |

Key Staff

| Role | Name (Correct at September 2014) | Contact Details | Contact Details |
|--|--|---|---|
| Vice Principal (Achievement and Guidance) | Mrs Helen Cullen | office@preston.somerset.sch.uk Tel 01935 471131 | Please mark emails FAO. Vice Principal (Achievement and Guidance) |
| Governor Link | Mr Graham Pritchard | office@preston.somerset.sch.uk | Please mark emails FAO. Governor Link for Attendance |
| Attendance Officer | Miss Jade Farmer | office@preston.somerset.sch.uk Tel 01935 471131 Option 1 | Please mark emails FAO. Attendance Officer |
| LEA Education Welfare Officer | Mrs Sarah McEvansoneya | Tel 01935 463888 Morley House 26 West Hendford Yeovil Somerset BA21 1XE | FAO. Education Attendance Team |

ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE

Preston School fully supports Somerset LEAs schools Attendance Policy. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is legitimate. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

All children may sometimes be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Attendance is recorded in sessions, with 2 sessions a day.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other legitimate cause. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- **Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily**
- **Appointments for which medical evidence has not been received**
- **Truancy before or during the school day**
- **Absences which have never been properly explained**
- **Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark**
- **Holidays in term time for which leave of absence has not been granted**
- **Illness for which medical evidence has not been received.**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer. The Local Authority Education Welfare Officer will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, this Officer can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and / or 3 months imprisonment, the court could also give a community order.

PURPOSE

- To maximise attendance rates.
- To acquaint parents with their responsibility for ensuring regular attendance and consistency between school and home expectations of behaviour.
- To set the culture that unjustified absence and poor behaviour are not tolerated.
- To develop self-discipline raising individual standards in attendance.
- The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

GUIDELINES

- Parents and the school need to see themselves in partnership in the education of their children with respect to attendance.
- Parent's responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school by 08:20 for an 08:30 start, properly attired and in a condition to learn.
- There will be close communication which ensures that the appropriate staff, management team and outside agencies have relevant pupil information at all times.
- Parents will be encouraged to sign the Home School Agreement which reinforces the need for high levels of cooperation and attendance.
- Additional support will be provided for pupils with more challenging attendance difficulties through both internal staff and use of outside agencies as appropriate.

PROCEDURES

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Attendance Registers are required by law to be called twice a day; once at the commencement of the morning session and once at the commencement of the afternoon session. Registers close at 08:40 and 13:55, arrival after these times must be supported with a parental note, or medical evidence if necessary, in order for the session to be authorised.
- Procedures for the marking of registers and associated administration along with the agreed rewards and sanctions are outlined in Staff Guidance Notes and Staff Handbook.
- The Attendance Officer is to monitor attendance records and make appropriate referrals. Academic mentors and Learning Managers are to ensure where possible all absences are authorised by parental notification.
- The school attendance officer will contact parents via text, phonecall or e-mail when a pupil is absent and the school has not been informed. Parents must provide a reasonable explanation for all absences or they will be coded as unauthorised.
- On occasion the school, along with the LA Education Welfare Officer will undertake Truancy sweeps.
- The school operates a weekly tracking system monitoring attendance and rewards individual and group achievements in this area.
- The Vice Principal (Achievement and Guidance), Attendance Officer and LA Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will meet fortnightly at an Attendance review meeting,
- Students whose attendance is below 90% or those with 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a 12 week window will be discussed at this meeting.
- Holiday during school time will not be granted unless it is due to exceptional circumstances.

i) Truancy

Teachers are required to maintain electronic registers and use SIMS data to check absences. If a child truants from a single lesson, students will be expected to spend at least the equivalent time of the time missed in detention. Truancy for a whole day is punished by an isolation.

If a child does not arrive at school and a parent/guardian does not call in on their behalf, a phonecall will be made or a text message or e-mail will be sent using rs connect ed using the contact numbers held on SIMS. If a parent responds to this message stating that the child left for school, but has not arrived, it is the parents responsibility to contact the police, however school will support initial investigations as necessary (for example speaking to any student in school about student's whereabouts).

If a young person is found to be absent from a lesson, the class teacher should alert the attendance officer. A thorough search of site will be made for the young person. If the child is not found on school site, it will be established by the Attendance Officer when the student was last seen.

In the event of a student truanting school the following procedure will take place:

- Parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer.
- Student to be returned to school as soon as possible.
- Meeting with Academic Mentor, or Learning Manager and parent to be arranged.
- SOL detention will be set if a single lesson is missed. In the event that a student truant 2 or more lessons they will be placed in isolation for a day.
- If student does not return to school or return home by the end of the day. Parents will need to contact the Police.

ii) Holidays during term time

- Preston School follows the DFE and Local Authority guidelines with reference to holidays during term time.

The guidance issued in 2013 set out that holidays during school time can no longer be authorised by schools; unless there are exceptional circumstances. Preston School will therefore not be authorising any absence during term time unless the application meets the exceptional circumstances criteria set out below:-

- One or more parents is a member of the armed forces and has been or is due to be deployed overseas within the last or next 6 months and evidence can be provided to support this.
- One or more parents is a member of the police, fire or medical NHS staff who has restricted leave due to their job and evidence can be provided to support this.
- Death of a parent, grandparent, step parent, sibling, or step sibling who is living overseas and whose funeral will be overseas.
- Terminal illness of immediate family member (this includes parent, step parent and siblings who have less than 3 months anticipated left to live).

If an unauthorised absence holiday is taken during term time the school is able to action the following once 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days have occurred).

- Refer the family to the Education Welfare Officer with the Local Authority.
- Request a penalty notice is served on the parents.

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Holidays

If a penalty notice is issued for nonattendance the initial fine is £60 per parent, per child.

If the penalty notice is paid within 21 days of issue this ends the process.

In the event of a parent not paying the penalty notice the amount increases as below:-

- 21 – 28th day £120 per child, per parent.
- Post 28th day, if not paid the LEA will proceed to prosecution of the parents and the case will go to court.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets:

Whole school attendance targets are agreed annually with the Local Authority. These are expressed as a % of absence.

The internal target for an individual's attendance is 96%

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this way are:

- The school attendance officer who has responsibility for the maintenance of all attendance records and analysis.
- Teaching staff who register all students in morning AM time and afternoon AM time and check attendance in lesson 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 using lesson monitor.
- Academic mentors who monitor individual attendance through weekly reports and progress reports.
- Learning Managers who monitor attendance and associated targets for each academic mentor group and intervene as necessary.
- Vice Principal – Achievement and Guidance who has whole school responsibility for attendance.
- The attendance officer, the Education Welfare Officer, Vice Principal (Achievement and Guidance)
- Fortnightly meetings to discuss significant non-attendance.

Child Missing in Education

If a young person leaves Preston School, the parents/guardians are expected to inform the school in writing.

If a student leaves during the course of the academic year and staff are not informed of which school they will be transferring to or, if Preston School are unable to establish that the young person has started, the child will remain on roll at Preston until it is established where he/she is receiving education.

Once a new school placement has been confirmed and the student has started, a CTF (Common Transfer File) will be sent electronically and paper files will be sent via recorded delivery to the new school.

If a school placement has not been confirmed, Attendance Officer will complete a missing in education form and will send to the Local Authority Missing in Education Team, in line with the link shown below. The child will remain on school roll until the Local Authority notifies us.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION

The Governors Welfare Sub-Committee participates in the development and review of the relevant aspects of the Attendance Policy. The Senior Leadership Team will annually review the success of the policy.

LEGISLATIVE GUIDANCE

This policy has been drawn up with full regard for the 1998 Human Rights Act, which came into force in October 2000, and the 2001 Disability Discrimination Act, which must be implemented by 2004 and was reviewed in light of Education and Attendance Guidance in 2013.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE REQUEST (less than 5 days)

We request that this form is returned to school at least two weeks before the date of absence

Name of Pupil.....

Academic Mentor Group

Current Attendance Level.....%

I hereby make application for my son/daughter.....to be absent from school
from.....to.....(date

inclusive) to (please tick)

Attend family funeral

Attend Medical Appointment

Other (please state reason)

.....

.....

Signed..... Parent/ Guardian

Print Name

Date.....

If the school refuses and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and noted on your child’s attendance record. This may be used in any legal action taken for poor attendance.

Please tick the appropriate box and provide details as appropriate:

Have not made any previous request(s) for leave in the current school year.

Have made previous request(s) for leave in the current school year

Details of previous request made:

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ABSENCE REQUEST REPLY SLIP: TO BE ISSUED TO PUPIL TO TAKE HOME

Name of ChildAcademic Mentor Group

I am informing you that your request for your child to be absent from school from
..... to has / has not been agreed.

The reason(s) for not agreeing to the absence:

Unfortunately it does not meet the exceptional circumstances criteria

Attendance falls below 85%

Other

AUTHORISED ABSENCE REQUEST (5 days or more)

We request that this form is returned to school at least two weeks before the date of absence

Name of Pupil.....

Academic Mentor Group.

Current Attendance Level.....%

I hereby make application for my son/daughter.....to be absent from school
from.....to.....(date inclusive)

My request meets the following exceptional circumstances:

- One or more parents is a member of the armed forces and has been or is due to be deployed overseas within the last or next 6 months and evidence can be provided to support this.
- One or more parents is a member of the police, fire or medical NHS staff who has restricted leave due to their job and evidence can be provided to support this.
- Death of a parent, grandparent, step parent, sibling, step sibling who is living overseas and whose funeral will be overseas.
- Terminal illness of immediate family member (this includes parent, step parent and siblings who have less than 3 months anticipated left to live).

I attach the appropriate evidence to support my request for exceptional circumstances.

Signed..... Parent/ Guardian

Print Name

Date.....

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ABSENCE REQUEST REPLY SLIP: TO BE ISSUED TO PUPIL TO TAKE HOME

Name of ChildAcademic Mentor Group

I am informing you that your request for your child to be absent from school
from to has / has not been agreed.

The reason(s) for not agreeing to the absence:

- Unfortunately it does not meet the exceptional circumstances criteria
- Attendance falls below 85%
- Other