



PENAIR  
SCHOOL



## Attendance Policy

- Written by: Rob Sharpe
- Person responsible: James Davidson
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## ATTENDANCE POLICY

**School Motto:** "Disce ut vivas" – learn in order to live.

**Mission Statement:** "To create and sustain a caring, learning school community of high quality where everyone is valued for who they are and for what they may become."

We recognise that pupils cannot help us to fulfil the vision and mission of Penair School unless they attend regularly and punctually.

### **Legal Requirements for all Schools**

- **Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that children between the ages of 5-16 should attend school regularly.**
- **Schools must keep 2 registers: an admission register which serves as the school roll, and an attendance register.**
- **Attendance registers must be called twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session by the class teacher.**
- **The register must show whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity, off-site or absent.**
- **When a pupil is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised.**
- **Authorised absence means either the school has given approval in advance, or that a satisfactory explanation was given afterwards.**

This policy has been developed with the Penair Partners School group to ensure a common approach across our schools. The schools are:

Archbishop Benson C of E Primary School

Devoran School

Penair School

St Mary's C of E School

## **1. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

*This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.*

## 2. School procedures

### Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved in accordance with the school's retention periods. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.10pm and will be kept open until 12.30pm.

### Form tutors will monitor attendance by:

- Marking a register at 8.30 am and 12.10 pm daily using the Schools Information Management System (SIMS) electronic registration (where this is not possible, paper copies will need to be taken and returned to the general office as soon as possible).
- Ensuring a three day absence letter is sent when information about an absence has not been supplied by the third day of the absence (in liaison with the respective Student Welfare Officer (SWO)).
- Passing to the respective Pastoral Lead and SWO any serious concerns regarding attendance or punctuality.
- Recording the reasons for absence on the Optical Mark Reader (OMR) absence sheet.
- Tracking patterns of absence within the tutor group each half-term and suggesting appropriate intervention strategies to the Pastoral Lead/SWO.
- Track patterns of lateness in liaison with the SWO/Pastoral Lead.

### Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible.

Parents should ring the school and leave a message on the school answerphone to report your child's absence or email the relevant form tutor with reasons for the unplanned absence.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### **Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. Notice should be given via email, in person or via telephone as per the unplanned absence.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. It is expected that children would return to school after the appointment wherever possible. Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in the 'Attendance Monitoring' section.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

### **Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. Schools will ring to follow through on any absence that has not been explained via email or telephone.

### **Reporting to parents**

Parents are kept up-to-date on their child's attendance through the reporting process for each year group through the course of the year.

## **3. Attendance Monitoring**

Student Welfare Officers and form tutors monitor pupil absence on a weekly basis. Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill. If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

For information on how the school collects and stores attendance data, please refer to the schools Privacy Notice.

### **Senior Staff, Senior Admin Assistant, Pastoral Support Workers will monitor attendance by:**

- Keeping a "late list" of pupils who arrive after 8.35 am.
- Providing regular attendance print-outs and percentage data for each tutor-group and year group.

### **The Pastoral Leader will:**

- Monitor attendance of the Year Group, particularly noting pupils with Special Educational Needs and Pupil Premium children.
- Award/recognise students with 100% attendance each term and/or academic year, with a certificate and Achievement points on ClassCharts (consideration given to medical absence) - SWOs.
- Present an award/reward to the Tutor Group with the highest % attendance termly. Letter to be sent to the tutor group from the Headteacher.

- Liaise with both the tutor and the SWO to investigate poor attendance and/or punctuality with the view to improving the situation.
- Meet with a pupil to investigate reasons for being late when the pupil has arrived late for 3 registrations in one half-term. The expectation is that parents will be contacted about this by the Form tutor and if the issue persists then by the Pastoral leader.
- Ensure that annual registration certificates are produced so that parents can see their child's accumulated attendance and punctuality. A certificate of this type is included with the annual report but can be requested at any time.

**The designated teacher for looked after children will as far as possible:**

- Ensure that any looked after child attends school regularly and achieves high educational standards.

**Pupils are expected to:**

- Arrive and register in the tutor room promptly at 8.30 am and at their period 4 lesson by 12.10 pm each school day.
- Register at the front reception if for any reason they are late after 8.35am. They must not go to any lessons until this has taken place. Pupils may be marked absent for the morning session if they arrive after 9.30 am and absent for the afternoon session if they arrive after 12.30 pm without good reason.
- Obtain a signature from the form tutor/Pastoral Lead/SWOs if the pupil needs to leave Penair during the day. This is given on receipt of a request note or telephone call from the parent/guardian. The pupil hands one section of the slip in at Reception on leaving school and keeps the other half - handing it back to Reception on return to school that day.
- Attend all lessons assigned to them. Truancy, (ie non-attendance of lessons **in or outside** the school grounds), will be investigated and appropriate sanctions given.

**We request that parents/guardians:**

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time properly equipped.
- Telephone the school before 8.30 am on the first day of absence, giving the reason for absence and an indication of when the pupil will be returning to school.
- Telephone again if for some reason the pupil is to be absent longer than was originally indicated.
- Supply a note to the form tutor explaining absence **only** if a phone call has **not** been made.
- Contact the Pastoral Lead/Student Welfare Officers if the reason for absence is caused by something other than illness, eg worry about school work, friendship problems etc.
- Understand that Penair School has to decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Support us in only allowing pupils to be absent for reasons that the School would authorise eg illness, bereavement, family issues, emergency dental work etc.
- Not allow students to stay home for reasons that the School would **not** authorise eg family holiday, shopping trips, hair appointment, birthday treat.
- Make all routine dental and medical appointments out of school hours or in the holidays.
- Contact the Headteacher in advance, in writing, for a Leave of Absence request Form if time is requested away from school. The request should be made two weeks in advance of the event. If holidays during term time are taken then the Headteacher will inform parents about the legal action that will be taken by the school in informing the Local Authority by way of them issuing fixed penalty fines.
- **Become aware of dates of all relevant external exams eg GCSEs, Speaking and Listening Tests in Languages, before booking an unavoidable trip. Parents can obtain this information by contacting the school.**

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. We are not able to grant leave of absence simply because a holiday is cheaper in term-time or more convenient work-wise. To ensure that we comply with these regulations, parents requesting leave of absence will need to detail the exceptional circumstance below, in order that these can be assessed.

Criteria are:

- Absence may not be granted if attendance is below 96% (school minimum target);
- A judgement on the impact that a child's absence will have on their education;
- The exceptional circumstances relating to the request for absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart;
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision;

### Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 per parent per child within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

**Please note that should a parent choose to take their child out of school during term time then they should expect a fixed penalty notice of £60 per parent per child to be levied on them via the Local Authority. This information is stated on the Application for Leave of Absence' pro forma that must be completed by parents who request a leave of absence for their child(ren) during term time.**

### If attendance or punctuality is a concern we will:

- Discuss the problem with the pupil to try and improve the situation. The school's approach to bullying is of particular significance here. Where problems outside school are identified as having an impact on a student's attendance, an appropriate level of multi-agency support will be developed.

- Inform the parent/guardian and include them in discussion about remedying the problem by way of offering support.
- Advocate prosecuting a parent/guardian after all other avenues have been pursued.

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

### **The governing body**

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. Attendance information is shared at each of the governors' Community & Ethos Committee meetings during the year.

### **The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **The Attendance team (Deputy Headteacher, Student Welfare Officers, Pastoral Leaders)**

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **Class teachers / form tutors**

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Office / reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

### **During the next three years we will:**

- Improve our monitoring system by reinforcing guidelines to students and parents and expanding our mentoring programme.
- Reinforce with parents the need to reduce the amount of holidays taken in term time owing to the impact on educational progress. Penair School will not authorise holidays taken during term time.
- Wherever possible, liaise with parents so that students' routine appointments to doctors, dentists etc are arranged outside school hours.
- Attempt to improve attendance to a school target for 96% overall.
- Ensure the provision of appropriate guidance and support for parents, students and staff.
- Keep parents informed of their child's attendance through first day contact (Keep Kids Safe text message facility, through letters of praise and concern and through individual attendance clinics when appropriate.
- Regularly inform Governors about attendance issues in reports to governors.
- Monitor this Policy every 3 years by the Headteacher and Full Governing Body. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Governing Body.

A range of strategies designed to tackle poor attendance is only a part of the school's approach to this issue. Whole-school issues such as providing effective pastoral support and effective teaching and learning are recognised as having a direct impact upon attendance.

## **6. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy



## 7. Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

<input type="checkbox"/>	Date written:	February 2010
<input type="checkbox"/>	Written by:	Mr R Sharpe
<input type="checkbox"/>	Person responsible:	Mr R Sharpe
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